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ABSTRACT

Seven articles explore ways in which students, administrators, and faculty can initiate and sustain conversation about the public life they share, and about dealing with the multiculturalism of today's campuses. The articles are: (1) "Backing into the Future: Columbus, Cleopatra, Custer, & the Diversity Revolution" by Carlos E. Cortes, which examines issues of political correctness in the history curriculum; (2) "Moderating Excess: Monocultural Roots of Multiculturalism" by Benjamin R. Barber, which suggests that "honest multiculturalism" will acknowledge and explore its "monocultural roots"; (3) "Shredding the Race Card" by Eric Liu, who urges young people to extricate themselves from the 1960s agenda and create a new one for themselves; (4) "Political Correctness: On How To Begin the Discussion" by Manfred Stanley, who identifies a new "politics of empathy"; (5) "Community and Group Identity: Fostering Mattering" by Daryl G. Smith, who sees memberships and participation as important for community-building; (6) "Under the Skin" by John Lahr, who reviews Anna Deavere Smith's dramatic dialogues about race, listening to strangers, and the importance of hearing voices and not just relying on the printed word; and (7) "Dialogue To Change Conflictual Relationships" by Harold H. Saunders and Randa Slim, who sketch a political process in their international work that may be of value to campuses with deep divisions and factions. (The Smith paper contains references.) (MAH)

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Foreword

by David W. Brown

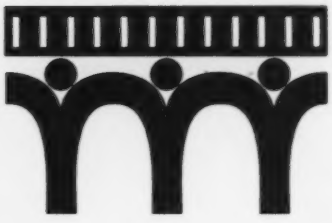
Despite mission statements in university catalogues and the convocation speeches of college presidents, the term "campus community" is becoming an oxymoron. There are just so many fault lines among faculty members, among students, and between them.

In recent years, caricatures of some of these differences have been given wide circulation by the media — "political correctness," "hate speech," curricular "culture wars," among others. And there are less publicized differences — the use of language to intimidate or exclude and the rigid hierarchies of campus life, whether academic or social — that undermine whatever community is thought to exist. People find it hard to talk about their differences constructively, and everyone finds some group, other than their own, to blame.

There has been a great deal of heat generated but very little light shed on how members of a public — in this case those who teach and learn together — can rethink their differences and enter into political dialogue that both educates and, at the same time, ameliorates campus problems.

The *Higher Education Exchange* wants to explore ways in which students, administrators, and faculty members can initiate and sustain an ongoing conversation about the public life that they share every day on their respective campuses. This publication does not want to rehash the issues that divide those in higher education, but instead be a forum for new ideas on how to deal with the divisions.

How do we build bridges of reasoned discourse among those who differ by race, gender, sexual orientation, or cultural background? How do those in our colleges and universities repair their differences or, indeed, even want to repair them? The commentaries of this first issue are offered as a way of beginning conversations on campus and across campuses.



Carlos Cortés describes the "History War" that engages those both in academia and in the general public. Benjamin Barber reminds us that "honest multiculturalism" will acknowledge and explore its "monocultural roots." Eric Liu thinks that young people have to extricate themselves from the 1960s agenda and create one for themselves. Manfred Stanley identifies a new "politics of empathy." Daryl Smith sees memberships and participation as important for community-building. Anna Deavere Smith's dramatic dialogues, as reviewed by John Lahr, are about race, about how to listen to strangers, about the importance of hearing voices and not just relying on the printed word. Harold Saunders and Randa Slim in "Dialogue to Change Conflictual Relationships," sketch a political process in their international work

that may also be of value to those campuses where divisions are deep or factions predominate. Finally, David Mathews offers an afterword. He discusses why "the character of politics largely is determined by the character of the political dialogue."

For the next issue of the *Exchange*, we will welcome speeches, lectures, and written opinion from teaching faculty who are concerned about how politics is practiced in their institutions. We know that much work of the professoriate that is not written for publication in refereed, disciplinary journals, nonetheless, deserves to be circulated beyond the writer's own immediate campus. We will also be looking for thoughtful critiques and proposals from students who are involved in the problems and politics of their respective campuses and from administrators who are similarly engaged and seeking change.

It will take time to reach a broad cross section of those interested in sustaining a conversation. But we hope that readers of this first issue of the *Exchange* will help us by sending names of colleagues and friends who should be included and tell us what additional ways (E-mail over existing networks, periodic newsletters, annotated reading lists, local conferences) they would like to pursue in facilitating the exchange of opinions and ideas.

We hope that you will join the conversation. We would like to hear from you.

Backing into the Future: Columbus, Cleopatra, Custer, & the Diversity Revolution

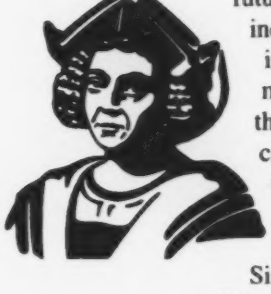
by Carlos E. Cortés

In 1492, Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas. At that very same time, American Indians discovered Columbus. Five hundred years later we prepare to celebrate that event. Or do we excoriate it? Or commemorate it? Or deplore it? Or merely recognize it?

Why, in 1992, should we still be debating — sometimes with detached calmness, sometimes with engaged vehemence — this 500-year-old event? Why should we still be arguing about how to deal publicly with it? Why can't we get our act together on this bit of ancient history?

Why has that long-dead Italian generated such an extraordinary degree of contemporary controversy, ranging from academic conferences to public events including a mock trial of Columbus, a conflict over the Rose Bowl Parade, two competing motion pictures, and the renaming of Columbus Day as Indigenous People's Day by the city of Berkeley?

The answer is as simple as it is elusive. Because we are worried about the future. And as documentary filmmaker Ken Burns has suggested, "Our future lies behind us."



Because we do not — as so many pontificating commencement speakers have urged us to do — I repeat, we do not march into the future. We back into it. Because consciously or unconsciously, as individuals, as groups, as a society, even as a world, we all back into the future dragging the heavy hand of history. Because so many people believe — or fear — that the ways we think about the past influence our destinies. Because as we reconsider, rediscover, reread, rethink, rechart, rewrite, reteach, and recommemorate the past, we continuously rearrange the foundations upon which we currently operate and alter the dynamics that drive us backing into the future.

Since the 1960s, the United States has been racked by a History War, a struggle over the interpretation, teaching, and commemoration of its past. That History War has involved battles for control of — or at least greater influence on — textbooks, courses, curricula,

graduation requirements, and public observances. It has involved battles over what questions should be asked as we reexamine our past. It has involved battles over whom should be included and excluded as we remember our past. And it has involved battles over how we should teach and publicly commemorate our past. For as Plato warned, "Those who tell the stories also rule the society."

As one battleground in today's History War, Columbus has become a convenient personification and embodiment — at least for this year — of that contest for control over the past. We may have backed 500 years into the future, but our eyes remain firmly fixed on the past, and our battles for supremacy in interpreting and observing that past have become increasingly contentious with time.

But why? Let me suggest at least three reasons.

First, because today's History War addresses the very core of our humanity and identity, by contesting who and what should be considered basic to our remembered, transmitted, and commemorated heritage.

Second, because the History War addresses one irrefutable reality — that we cannot escape our past, even if we are ignorant of it, because history's heavy hand rests on our present and influences our future, often in dramatic and unpredictable ways.

And finally, because the last quarter century has been a revolutionary period for the United States. I call it the Diversity Revolution. In terms of the humanities, that revolution has had two dimensions — demographic and conceptual.

The demographic dimension is easiest to describe. In the last quarter century, the United States has undergone a dramatic shift in its racial and ethnic composition. And those past demographic changes provide only an appetizer for the future.

According to a 1989 U.S. Bureau of the Census projection, in the next 40 years, between 1990 and the year 2030, for the United States as a whole, while the white American population will increase by only 25 percent, the African-American population will increase by 68 percent, the Asian-American, Pacific Island-American, and American Indian populations will increase by 79 percent, and the Latino or Hispanic population will increase by 187 percent. In California, members of so-called minority groups are projected to become the population majority within the next decade. That's the demographic future into which we are backing.

Beyond that has been the conceptual aspect of the Diversity Revolution. During the 1960s, the civil rights movement spurred persons of diverse backgrounds to ask new questions about their heritage — not only about their general heritage as Americans, but also about their special ethnic heritages. How do our personal and group heritages fit into the larger American story? How has this influenced the American story? In some cases, why haven't these heritages been presented as part of the American story? Why are the voices of

my ancestors missing?

These concerns ultimately lead to deeper, more troubling questions. How have past versions of the American story been distorted, intentionally or unintentionally, by leaving me out or by misrepresenting my presence? *When* will my stories be included, *how* will they be told, and *where* will they be taught? Such past-oriented questions backed the United States into the History War.

As the 1980s progressed, multicultural research, teaching, and engagement in the public arena increasingly moved from the margins to center stage. During the past decade, multiculturalists have launched a challenge to mainstream education, to the public humanities and to traditional views of history. In the process they have achieved widespread and often unnerving success — that is unnerving to traditionalists. Curricula, textbooks, graduation requirements, and state education codes and frameworks have become multiculturalized. Public humanities programs have responded with increased attention both to our nation's growing diversity and to the historical, contemporary, and future importance of that diversity.

But the success of multiculturalism has spawned a reaction — although not exactly an equal and opposite one — from the guardians of the humanities status quo. For the Macbeths of traditionalism, the Birnam wood of multiculturalism, safely marginalized in the 1960s and 1970s, has come to high Dunsinane hill. The counterattack has been led by a group I shall refer to as the Culture Cops.

The rallying cry of the Culture Cops has been PC, Political Correctness, the new academic and societal strawman. The counterattack has come via the rise of PCology, the pseudoscientific demonology of accusing anyone who supports multiculturalism as being an agent of Political Correctness. Unable to mount a coherent argument against multiculturalism, the Culture Cops have resorted to lumping, labeling, and stereotyping. Those who dare to advocate multicultural education, to publicly oppose bigotry, to present multicultural historical reinterpretations, or to propose changes in the traditionalist canon become the target of these neo-McCarthyite demonologists, who conflate them into a single category — "the enemy" — and brand them with the scarlet PC.

I must admit that on a couple of points — two in particular — my own beliefs happen to coincide with those of the PCologists. First, I agree with them that some multiculturalists (better yet, pseudo-multiculturalists), in their group-centered zeal and in their knee-jerk celebrating of diversity, have ignored the equally important imperative of unity and the need to recognize the cultural values and elements that bind us together as a nation. *Pluribus* without *Unum* is anarchy. Conversely, however, *Unum* without *Pluribus* is oppression.

For that reason I have taken the trouble to define myself as an E Pluribus Unum multiculturalist. That is, I see the Diversity Revolution's opportunities and challenges in terms of the historical

American balancing act of responding simultaneously to powerful Pluribus (pluralistic) and necessary Unum (unifying) imperatives, as well as carefully limiting both extremist Pluribus and extremist Unum when they become societally destructive.

I also agree with the PCologists on another point, which in itself contains elements of historical irony. As with most words, the precise linguistic origins of Political Correctness remain shrouded in mystery. Somebody said it the first time, but I'm not sure who did. The most convincing etymological theory about the evolution of that label seems to be that multiculturalists themselves invented PC to poke fun at the multicultural fringe group whom I shall refer to as the Word Cops. These are the hypersensitive language sleuths who have made an avocation of looking for any statement or illustration that they can possibly construe as being offensive, insensitive, homophobic, racist, sexist, agist, or any other kind of "ist." Having personally been branded PC by the Culture Cops for championing multiculturalism and multicultural education, I have also been chastised by the Word Cops for my lack of sensitivity.

On one occasion, a young female professor furiously took notes during one of my public lectures. In the ensuing question-and-answer period, she proceeded to blast me because I had used more quotes from men than from women. You heard me right. While I was talking, she was counting.

Last year I wrote an essay for teachers that I entitled "Latinos/Hispanics." Again I was criticized, by some people for using the word, Latinos, and by others for using the word, Hispanics. Being jumped by opposing groups of Word Cops gave me a great sense of comfort, comparable to the self-righteousness I feel when I am criticized by the PCologist Culture Cops.

After all, who decides what is the "right" word for an ethnic group? We don't hold national conventions to vote on the correct self-designation. The natural result — we use a variety of self-designations and sometimes we even disagree. When the National Association for the Advancement of *Colored* People celebrates *Black* History Month by holding an *African-American* Unity Banquet to raise money for the United *Negro* College Fund, you're going to tell me that any single word is *right*?

There are plenty of historically embedded negative epithets and demeaning references that I imagine most Americans would consider *wrong*, but there are few labels that I consider to be uncontestably *right*. While I recognize the critical importance of language, my fear of the excesses of the often well-intentioned but overzealous Word Cops, including those who spend their time inventing new ways to be offended, has impelled me to oppose most speech codes. Yet laid end to end, these usually ineffectual and often laughable Word Cops do not add up to anything resembling the fictitious radical reign of terror that PCologists claim is suffocating freedom of thought and

expression on college campuses throughout the nation.

If multicultural advocates like myself must suffer the slings and arrows of the hypersensitive Word Cops on one side, we must also do battle with the hyperventilating PCologist Culture Cops on the other. While the Word Cops spend their time criticizing others for being insensitive or using inappropriate language, the PCologist Culture Cops engage in a self-proclaimed crusade to preserve the American way of life, or at least the traditional American way of writing, teaching, and publicly observing history and other humanities. Of course, I'm not always sure what tradition they are trying to preserve. After all, exactly one hundred years ago a comparable debate over curriculum revision was occurring in the United States, only in this case it was the guardians of Greco-Roman tradition who were opposing the incorporation of such literary and philosophical Johnny-come-latelies as Machiavelli, Dante, and Shakespeare.

Like Chicken Little, the PCologists fear that the sky will fall down if a university establishes an ethnic studies graduation requirement, creates ethnic or women's studies courses, multiculturalizes its teaching of American history and culture, or worst of all requires world civilization rather than Western civilization. Yet the teaching of world civilizations does not obviate the importance of Western civilization. Rather it examines Western civilization alongside other civilization. As Rudyard Kipling wrote, "What should they know of England who only England know?" Academic supporters of world civilization requirements are hardly Mohandas Gandhi who, when asked what he thought of Western civilization, responded that he thought it would be a good idea.

The positing of new interpretations of our nation's history and injecting of new voices into our literary heritage do not threaten American *Unum*, but rather recast that *Unum* as a more *Pluribus* concept that recognizes the importance and value of engaging and considering previously marginalized voices and perspectives. Furthermore, multicultural perspectivism is not synonymous with relativism, although PCologists either ignore or fail to comprehend the difference. The presentation and consideration of new perspectives do not require the adoption of valueless, non-judgmental relativism, but rather call for the consideration of alternative perspectives in making judgments.

The History War ranges far beyond academia into the public sector. In fact, as we back into the future, we're even fighting public battles over things that occurred more than a thousand years *before* Columbus. Was Cleopatra black? So asked the cover of the September 23, 1991 issue of *Newsweek*.

Was Cleopatra black? Quickly, yes or no?

Or make it a multiple choice question. Yes. No. Both. Neither. I couldn't care less. Or was she really a Chicana?

Was Cleopatra black? The answer, if approached in a yes-no,

true-false, or multiple choice format, becomes trivialized. The question, however, if taken seriously and with all of its complexity, addresses some fundamental issues about the past and the way that we relate to it.

If we focus merely on the yes-she-was/no-she-wasn't dichotomy, we are engaging in a futile exercise in presentism. Cast in this dichotomous fashion, the question merely asks you to take contemporary U.S. thinking about racial categorization, hop into a time machine, zip back across time, space, and culture, and impose that thinking on ancient Egypt. Would we, as 1992 Americans, categorize her as black?

But that's more than just ahistorical presentism. That's cultural imperialism, because it implies that our ways of categorizing people by race are correct and, therefore, superior to all other times, places, and cultures.

Worse than that, it trivializes the issues of race, racism, and diversity. I have not spent nearly a quarter of a century of my life battling in the History War for multicultural education and intergroup understanding so that the next time they remake the movie, "Cleopatra," they cast Diana Ross in the lead rather than Madonna.

But if the answer is so irrelevant, so presentist, and so trivializing, then why do I say that the question is important? I do so because the question, if taken seriously and answered with complexity, not dichotomously, challenges us to rethink the place of Africa in world history and to question the process of the social construction of knowledge. It embodies the challenge to historical thinking issued by Martin Bernal in his book, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785-1985*, the first volume of his *Black Athena* series, in which he accuses nineteenth-century European classicists of purposefully rewriting history by downplaying African and Semitic influences on Greek and therefore Western civilization. It embodies the challenge by Molefi Kete Asanti and other Afrocentrists, who call for a reinterpretation of world history with Africa holding greater prominence.

The question — Was Cleopatra black? — is important because it again raises the issue of whose voices have been and will be heard, whose perspectives have been and will be recognized, and whose interpretations have been or will be considered. It also raises the question of why these voices have traditionally been ignored, minimized, marginalized, and often excluded from our thinking about and discussions of the past.

The issue is not whether you agree with all of the arguments proffered by Martin Bernal. Nor is it a matter of accepting every claim made by Afrocentrists, by women's studies scholars, by gay and lesbian scholars, or by scholars of the Latino, American-Indian, Asian-American, or other group experiences.

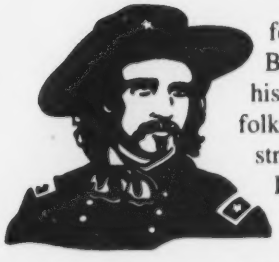
Their interpretations, like all scholarly interpretations, demand careful assessment. Whatever distorted cries of alarm may arise from the ranks of the PCologists, true multiculturalists do not seek to substitute insular ethnocatechism for exclusivist Eurocatechism. Quite the contrary, our goal is to keep the humanities open to the ongoing weighing of new perspectives and to the ongoing contemplation of the historical and future implications of these new interpretations.

In short, the question — Was Cleopatra black? — is important because it influences the way that we back into the future. Do we back into the future with a willingness to remain open to a continuous reconsideration of our heritage and its significance for the years to come? Or do we close our minds to *thinking* about the past and demand instead that we and our heirs merely *ingest* a calcified status quo view of the past, a closed-ended cultural literacy in which historical knowledge and American culture are static givens to be memorized, not dynamic processes to be continuously analyzed, reconsidered, and reinterpreted?

Custer's Next Stand

Who won the Battle of the Little Big Horn? Well, it depends which battle you are talking about.

In 1876 the Sioux and the Cheyenne won, when they annihilated George Armstrong Custer's 7th Calvary in the First Battle of the Little Big Horn.



Then came the Second Battle of the Little Big Horn, when the federal government transformed that land into the Custer Battlefield National Monument, ignoring the fact that Custer and his troops weren't out there alone. What happened to those other folks, the ones who fought and died battling against Custer in the struggle to defend their land and their way of life? By taking the Little Big Horn and naming it Custer Battlefield National Monument, Congress had erased the Indian historical presence, stilled their voices, and for the time being turned those warriors into the vanishing Americans. White America had won the Second Battle.

Then came 1989, and a group of Indians reclaimed the battlefield, or at least reclaimed their historical presence on the battlefield when, without authorization, they erected a plaque commemorating Indian heroes of the battle and reinjecting Indian perspectives into that monument. The plaque later came down, but the point had been made — we, too, have played a part in our nation's past.

The Third Battle of the Little Big Horn had begun, to be concluded in 1991 when Congress renamed the battlefield as the Little Big Horn National Monument and approved the establishment of a memorial there to Indians who died in the battle. In this way Congress transformed the monument from the exclusivist celebration of only white soldiers to an inclusivist commemoration of all of the participants, whatever their races and ethnicities.

So who won? Well, Indians won the first battle. White men won the second battle. And all Americans won the third battle, because it signified a victory for multiculturalism, for incorporating the voices of Americans of all backgrounds into the public commemorations of our nation's past. It signified a victory for all Americans because it was a step toward backing into the future as a more inclusive nation by recognizing the historical validity and societal importance of engaging the multiple perspectives and multiple experiences that make up our national heritage, rather than continuing the exclusivist celebration of that heritage in a manner that includes some Americans and excludes others.

Nehru of India once said, "Life is like a game of cards. The hand that is dealt you is determinism; the way you play it is free will." Demographic projections guarantee that the Diversity Revolution will continue to gain momentum and become an even more dynamic element of our future determinism. But we, as Americans, and we, as humanists, can play the hand of diversity with a high degree of free will.

In fact, despite the wailings of the PCologists, multiculturalism and multicultural education may have already triumphed, although the form of that triumph will continue evolving in the future. Maybe the signal came from Diane Ravitch, coauthor of California's 1987 History-Social Science Framework and an assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Education, when in 1990 she wrote in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "The real issue on campus and in the classroom is not whether there will be multiculturalism, but what kind of multiculturalism will there be?"

I think she's right. After all, throughout the nation, state legislatures and education departments increasingly are mandating multicultural education in kindergarten through twelfth grade (for example, Minnesota now requires multicultural, gender-fair, disability-aware education). Moreover, according to a 1991 study (reported in the January/February 1992 issue of *Change*), nearly one-half of all U.S. four-year colleges and universities now have some sort of multicultural graduation requirement, nearly half require world civilization, and more than half offer courses in ethnic and/or women's studies.

Further support for Ravitch's conclusion came from renowned classicist Bernard Knox, who delivered the 1992 National Endowment for the Humanities' Jefferson Lecture, which he entitled "The Oldest Dead White European Males." In an interview in the *Washington Post* published the day before his lecture, Knox admitted that the canon should be expanded, while also arguing that he opposed "jettisoning the old one and putting in an entirely new one." I agree. I, too, oppose such jettisoning. In fact, so does virtually every multiculturalist I know, although you'd never guess that from the hysterical lamentations of the Culture Cops or the churlish carp-

ings of the Word Cops.

We can listen to new voices along with the old. Homer and Hawthorne can coexist with Maxine Hong Kingston. We can read Toni Morrison without jettisoning Herman Melville. Leslie Silko and John Steinbeck can help us explore human dilemmas, as can Shakespeare. Thomas Wolfe can enlighten us, but so can Tomás Rivera. In the words of Alfred North Whitehead, "The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order."

If Diane Ravitch is correct, then the History War has truly moved into its next phase, in which multiculturalists with often widely divergent perspectives will work together and argue together and build together to help us back more successfully into the future of the Diversity Revolution. Not that the History War has ended. It will continue because the ongoing advances in scholarship and humanistic expression related to race, ethnicity, gender, and other aspects of American diversity will constantly live in tension with historically rooted, traditionalistic humanities beliefs, ideologies, and emotions, thereby maintaining the enriching turbulence of the humanistic landscape. As that old radical, England's Queen Victoria, once mused, "Change must be accepted . . . when it can no longer be resisted."

Certainly multiculturalism will not resolve all contemporary problems nor even all questions raised by the Diversity Revolution. The multiculturalizing of the humanities will not *solve* the problems of socioeconomic inequality, of political representation, or of poverty and crime and violence. It won't even *solve* the problem of bigotry, which has existed throughout history. Yet it can *contribute* to greater social cohesion through better self, intragroup, intergroup, and ultimately societal understanding, even if it does not fully achieve Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's dream when he wrote, "If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility." For as we rethink, rewrite, reteach, and recommemorate through history, literature, and the other humanities and arts, we reshape and sometimes recast the very metaphors that form the perceptual guideposts to our multicultural future.

British historian A. J. P. Taylor once wrote, "The great lesson of history is that there are no lessons of history." History does not teach, but we may learn from it. And as we learn more about the past, not only about the Biographies of Great Men, but also about the struggles and striving, the victories and defeats, the agonies and ecstasies of ordinary people — women and men of all racial and ethnic backgrounds — then maybe we can help ourselves and others to do what Columbus is given credit for doing. Maybe we can all back into the future together because we have finally — and more fully — discovered America.

Moderating Excess: Monocultural Roots of Multiculturalism

by Benjamin R. Barber

Monoculturalism has multicultural consequences. Pluralism, tolerance, and multiculturalism have distinctive Eurocentric roots that justify the special place of "Western civilization" in the multicultural curriculum.

In the attacks on Western culture and the canon, there is a certain confusion about exactly what is at stake in public education in a multicultural democracy. This confusion also envelops the relationship between the many peoples who make up our society and the one sovereign people that constitutes our nation as a political and legal entity. The motto *E Pluribus Unum* is actually a little misleading, for the great *Unum* — although it once arose out of an early "many" — is in political practice the premise and not the outcome of diversity. In our constitutional regime, diversity and difference are relegated to the private sphere, where they can be promoted and enjoyed, but they are prudently barred from the public sphere, whose object is precisely to ensure the impartiality of citizenship by securing a universal personhood for all citizens. Personhood is intentionally acultural, aiming at a legal formalism in which differences are dissolved.

To take one example, the United States historically celebrated its openness to religion by building a wall between it and government. American Catholics may celebrate Catholicism and American Jews Judaism, but what American citizens celebrate is religious freedom: religious tolerance and the separation of state and church. Much the same is true of race. When, in the Civil War years, America began to try to live up to the putative universalism of its founding ideas (making good on the promise of "We the People"), it did so not by extending the civic compass from whites to blacks but, in the extraordinary words of the Fifteenth Amendment, by proclaiming that the rights of citizens cannot be denied or abridged "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." It did not read the Negro race into the Constitution, it read race itself entirely out. Difference, an occasion for pride in the private sphere, becomes in the public an occasion for prejudice, and hence is prohibited.

The controversial 1991 New York State Social Studies Review and Development Committee report "One Nation: Many Peoples" is but one example of a form of multiculturalism that seems insufficiently attuned to commonality. It focuses on the plural "peoples" of New York State to ground its multicultural inclinations, but about the "nation" alluded to in its title it is earnestly opaque.— as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Diane Ravitch, and other critics have noted. The report takes a seemingly moderate attitude, claiming to "balance" difference and citizenship, as if they were two sides of a single coin, and in doing so meets the dialectical standards emphasized in the last section. But there is a sense in which a dialectical balance is hard to come by. Understood as incommensurable virtues of quite separate public and private realms, difference and citizenship are finally "balanced" only by keeping them apart — the one, personal and private; the other, public and civic.

This raises a question about public education's civic mission and its public agenda. Like some of the conservatives we have been criticizing, the New York State committee's report neither acknowledges sufficiently the overriding interest of public schools in the public education of democratic citizens (which requires an emphasis on the commonality of democratic civic ideals) nor recognizes fully the cultural roots of those ideals in the "dominant culture" it is so impatient to delegitimize. Mimicking those conservatives who want to privatize education, radical multiculturalists sometimes seem anxious to let the "public" fall silently out of public education. Despairing of the private domain, they seem to want education to assume the private duties of cultural socialization traditionally discharged by family, religion, and tradition — by private groups and voluntary associations.

Conservatives want to teach the canon, critics want to teach multiculturalism: Who wants to teach democracy? Private agendas abound: Who will teach the public agenda? Like other universals, the very notion of a public can be rendered illegitimate by a too-critical multiculturalism that insists on seeing American culture as nothing more than a disguise for the hegemony of a single class. Public education (most education in America) is necessarily about the education of public persons, of democratic citizens devoted to a common set of legal and political principles that work both to ameliorate and to transcend difference. These principles are the water in which individuals and distinctive groups swim without colliding. To teach these democratic principles means, in turn, to teach democracy's history and supporting culture — along with its defects and manifold hypocrisies.

Formally speaking, as an abstract system of laws, democracy's constitutional and civic framework is independent of culture; genealogically, it is neither free-floating nor culturally undetermined. The principle of universal citizenship, the primacy of law

over human whim, the aspiration to civic participation — above all, the crucial idea underlying multiculturalism that all humans are created equal and have equal rights as individuals and as members of ethnic, gender, religious, and other groups — these are all ideals that can neither be plucked from thin air nor selected at random from some global inventory available to all peoples at all times. As observed above, many cultures evince universal tendencies, but not all tendencies can be universally found in all cultures.

Think for a moment about the ideas and principles underlying anticanonical curricular innovation and critical multiculturalism: a conviction that individuals and groups have a right to self-determination; a belief in human equality coupled with a belief in human autonomy; the tenet that holds that domination in social relations, however grounded, is always illegitimate; and the principle that reason and the knowledge issuing from reason are themselves socially embedded in personal biography and social history, and thus in power relations. Every one of these ideas is predominantly the product of Western civilization. Science, technology, mathematics, literacy, literature, and scores of other cultural artifacts have origins that can be traced to a wide variety of civilizations, including those of Africa and Asia. Democracy has had a narrower provenance. Multiculturalism as an ideal has flourished mainly in the West. There were in Africa magnificent ancient cultures — in Benin, in Zimbabwe, in Mali, in Ghana, and (as is better known) in Egypt — from which Westerners have much to learn; moreover, these civilizations have influenced the early shaping of Western civilization itself. But liberal democracy and its supporting ideology of rights, equality, and autonomous community do not belong to their generic legacy or largesse. They are rooted in Europe and become stronger as European civilization advances. The democratic idea is born in a delicate condition in Judeo-Christian Western Asia and in the civic republicanism of Hellenic Athens and the republican legalism of Rome; it grows in medieval Christian Europe and emerges in the free principalities of Italy, Switzerland, and Germany in early modern Europe. In the new nation-states of France and England, it is tested in the quest for religious freedom from repressive church-related monarchies and in the struggle for self-government in the face of despotism. America's unifying political principles emerge, in turn, as hard-won spoils of this violent, frequently hypocritical, and always powerfully ambivalent history. These unifying and just ideals alone are what privilege "Western civilization" courses and whatever principal texts (the canon) might be associated with them in America's classrooms.

E PLURIBUS UNUM

Put simply, multiculturalism has monocultural origins. As a society, we are a rich tapestry of peoples from every part of the globe,

each with its own proud history and cultural roots. We need curricula attuned to that variety and capable of drawing marginalized peoples into learning. But as a constitutional system offering to these multiple peoples a regime of democratic tolerance, stable pluralism, and mutual respect that (to the degree the ideal is made real) can protect all these constituent cultures, we have a particular, even unique, cultural history. For many, perhaps even most, societies, multiculturalism and the celebration of difference have meant prejudice, persecution, fratricide, tribal war, and anarchy. America is the exception, Yugoslavia more nearly the rule. Current examples of unstable multicultural societies can be found almost anywhere one looks: not just Yugoslavia but in Romania, in India, in Nigeria, in Sri Lanka, and of course in the disintegrated ex-Soviet Union. Even in liberal multicultural societies such as Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, and Canada, cultural minorities exist in various degrees of distrust, animosity, and open rebellion with respect to the dominant majority.

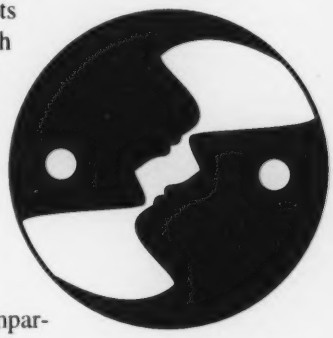
Our own European brand of multiculturalism, before it was modulated by liberal democracy, gave rise not to tolerance and stability but to the War of the Roses, the Inquisition, and the Thirty Years War. And then there was a tragic history of colonialism and imperialism that paralleled the rise of liberal democracy. Where democracy failed in Europe, it produced two centuries of intranational fratricide, several world wars, and the Holocaust. It was refugees from these multicultural conflagrations who sought in America what they believed was a unique brand of political comity; a comity that, they believed, was afforded by a constitutional system devoted, in the ideal at least, to universal equality and rights. The liberal democratic ideals that permit, even encourage, cultures rooted in difference to coexist and cooperate rather than persecute and annihilate, that afford celebration of difference without producing discrimination and internecine warfare, must then be regarded as both rare and precious.

Radical teachers — reductionist, relativist, deconstructionist, postmodern — are children of a predominantly Western tradition and a tribute to its procreative diversity. Critics of the canon are the canon's latest interlocutors and proof of its evolving character. The canon has always had critics; indeed, it is constituted by a series of radical critiques, each one widening the compass of debate and enlarging the pool of debaters. The role of "outsider" coveted by modern critics was invented by some of the greatest "canonical" writers, including Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx, and Nietzsche, right down to Arendt, Foucault, and Derrida.

The history that defines multicultural ideas would then seem worthy of special attention in a society that, precisely in the name of its variety, wishes to succor and preserve its unity. It is neither Eurocentric arrogance nor white male hegemony that pleads for special attention: it is self-reflective and honest multiculturalism bent on

exploring its own genealogy. Indeed, it is only the sense of commonality that can kindle common responsibilities that oblige Americans to care about the needs and aspirations of groups other than their own.

The West defined by its dead white male protagonists has brought many ills to the modern world: colonialism, paternalism, expansionism, imperialism, and an unsavory taste for hypocrisy that permitted the toleration of slavery in the midst of freedom and still permits poverty in the midst of plenty. Of course, the East and the South do not necessarily look much better when their stories are told by dead brown males (try reading the Hindi *Bhagavad-Gita* for its multicultural and transgender perspectives!) or by live yellow males (the Greater East-Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere was a melting pot in which distinctive peoples were melted in a rather more literal sense than they might have wished) or even by live white females (Are the fringes of the pro-life or pro-choice movements any less monomaniacal and intolerant than the macho-man gun lobby?). Still, with or without the comparisons, the history we teach our children must report and critically debate and perhaps even distribute blame for the consequences of elitist hegemony. But in the shadowed train of its many vices, the Western tradition also brought with it one great set of virtues, a gift of its dialectical history: the ideal of democracy and the rule of law, of personal liberty secured by popular sovereignty. It has given us the democratic tools with which democracy's hypocrisies and disguised hegemonies might be challenged and dismantled. And it has produced those vital ideals of pluralism, tolerance, and the separation of private and public that have permitted American multiculturalism to function democratically rather than destructively.



It would be a terrible irony if one of the results of democracy's American success were to be an erosion of education for American democracy; if the critical perspective parented by Western philosophy were to turn patricidal; if the principles of universal inclusion and tolerance for diversity that have drawn and continue to draw so many different cultures to this land and are the essence of what it means to be an American were to be shoved aside because of a refusal, in the name of difference, to teach their unique history and, along with its vices, the virtues of the culture that produced them.

Shredding the Race Card

by Eric Liu

Last month my sister called me a "banana."

I'd been kidding her about her love of hip-hop music and dance. She joked that, yes, despite being the daughter of Chinese immigrants, she was indeed "black at heart." And then she added, lightheartedly, "You, on the other hand, well, you're basically a banana." That is yellow on the outside but white in the inside.

"I'm no banana!" I protested. But it was too late. I stood accused.

In the weeks since than, I have wondered what it means to be black, or white, or Asian, "at heart" — particularly for my generation. The answers have been troubling. In times that demand ever-clearer thinking, it has become too easy for us to shut off our brains: "It's a black thing," says the popular T-shirt. "You wouldn't understand."

The civil rights triumphs of the sixties and the cultural revolutions that followed made it possible for minorities to celebrate our heritages in a way that is empowering to us and enriching to the nation. But the sixties also bequeathed to young Americans a legacy of near-pathological race-consciousness, a culture not of diversity but of division and subdivision.

Today's society of entitlement — and of race-entitlement in particular — tells us plenty about what we get (and don't get) if we are black or white or female or male or old or young. It is silent, however, on some other important issues.

For instance: What do we "get" for being American? And just as importantly, what do we owe? These are questions around which minorities like me must tread carefully — focusing on common interests, on civic culture, on responsibility, and on integration sounds a little too "white" for some people.

The suspicion that such rhetoric is a smoke screen for right-wing racism is not without foundation. But both "sides" in the debate about race are equally responsible for the narrowness that pervades the discussion.

Let's start with the politically correct left. Among twentysomethings, these are, if not the majority, then a most oppressively vocal minority. One ongoing p.c. crusade, the push for "multicultural education," encapsulates all that is flawed with today's liberals.

The desire to make curricula more inclusive and historically accurate is unassailable. But the "multiculturalists" are not con-

cerned primarily with inclusiveness. They would cut out sections of history that show a "Eurocentric" bias — despite the fact that the U.S. began as a distinctly European experiment. In the extreme, some would institute a purely Afrocentric curriculum for black students — despite the fact that the scholarship to support such a worldview is, at best, questionable.

Either way, the endeavor is characterized by the same weaknesses that cripple other p.c. liberal forays into public policy: an untenable cultural relativity, a double standard on racism, shoddy results, and the notion that a public program should be therapy for the oppressed.

Unfortunately, more and more minorities accept these flaws as the means to a worthy end. But to what end?

Power. Black essayist Shelby Steele has written of the New Sovereignty, in which race-based grievance groups have become self-perpetuating fiefdoms. The NAACP has only an ambivalent interest, he asserts, in making progress against discrimination, because grievance is what keeps it afloat. Every defeat is an affirmation of the group's lifeblood — victimhood. Every victory is suspect.

Steele, in the view of many black intellectuals, is a Tom, an Oreo, a pawn of the white Establishment. But he is, for the most part, right. Liberals are often today's most fierce conservatives: afraid of change, comfortable with the trappings of power earned over the last quarter century, unable to let go of their original and most effective weapon — white guilt.

Meanwhile, my generation has assiduously read the signals sent out by our public institutions. Be separate. Ask for more. Classify yourselves and stand in line for what is rightly yours. On campuses, blacks hang out largely with blacks, Asians with Asians, and Latinos with Latinos. Affirmative action has brought us diversity, yes. It has also brought more tribalism and balkanization than any starry-eyed liberal of the sixties ever intended.

On the other side of the spectrum, young neoconservatives have delighted in exposing the follies of the politically correct. They do a great job. Their criticism, however, reveals the limitations of a conservative vision: they can point out what's wrong with liberals, but they have no plan of their own.

If a pernicious sense of collective entitlement is what haunts the left, then a virulent fear of affirmative government plagues the right. After the Los Angeles riots, right-wingers from Quayle on down blurted petulantly that the last thing we needed was another go at the Great Society. True enough. But then what?

The right can also display a meanness of spirit to match its poverty of vision. The problem many conservatives had with the Willie Horton ad of 1988 was not that it was racist, but that it was too heavy-handed. Tomorrow's right, you can infer, will be much more savvy about its racism, much more skillful in its manipulation of white fears.

Even among the majority of young conservatives who are not racist, appeals to de-emphasize race ring somewhat hollow. If Reagan or Bush had fostered a public culture in which all could take pride equally, and if their young followers had posited an activist alternative to Establishment liberalism, these appeals would not be falling today on such cynical ears.

Who remains, in this caricature of a national conversation, to talk sense? Who can resist playing the still-potent cards of guilt and fear? Who will lead?

The young. The twentysomething generation is still the key, as confused as we may be now. We are the first American generation to have been born into an integrated society, and are accustomed to more race-mixing than any generation before us. We have seen the worst the Republicans and the Democrats have to offer, and we are young enough to apply those lessons into the next century. We started open-minded, and it's not too late for us to stay that way.

The Progressive. The historian Richard Hofstadter called Theodore Roosevelt "the conservative as progressive," a President who pushed for reform and social change in the name of very traditional ideals. Such Progressives are not irresponsibly liberal, and not irredeemably reactionary. They are distinct from both old-line Lefties and predictable laissez-faire types. Does race in America really boil down to oppressors vs. victims? Those who reject such false choices — and who have an *interest* in rejecting them — will lead the country out of the blame game.

The minorities of the left. Only Nixon, it is said, could go to China. In race relations, the analogy holds: Only those with enough credentials and political capital can plausibly bring common sense back to the left. It is easy for William Bennett, former Education Secretary under Reagan, to pick apart multiculturalism. But the effect is greater when Steven Carter, young, liberal black Yale law professor, pokes holes in affirmative action.

If new leadership is half the equation for improved race relations, the other half is a new agenda.

Integration, that forgotten ideal, should stand atop the agenda. Not integration by threat — we see in America's continuing suburbanization what busing, quotas, and irrational housing policies bring — but integration through shared positive experiences.

We need to reinvigorate our civic culture, as writer Mickey Kaus, sociologist Charles Moskos, and others have advocated. Voting, community service, public education — with the proper attention, these institutions offer more hope for social equality among races

than any individual minority interest group's lobbying efforts.

Minority leaders must also accept the wisdom of emphasizing class at least as much as race. Programs that help the poor, regardless of race, are effective because they help the poor, regardless of race. While blacks do lay a special claim to our public institutions, that claim should be balanced when, by encouraging a culture of entitlement and victimhood, it erodes basic tenets of citizenship, among blacks and whites alike.

In that light, the new race relations agenda should center around civil responsibilities, not rights. We suffer from an obsession with rights today, from the trivial to the profound. And we have lost sight of our responsibilities — to ourselves, to our families, to our communities, to our country.

Does all this sound out of touch, paternalistic? Not apparently to American youth. According to a recent survey by the liberal group People for the American Way, a vast majority of all 18- to 24-year-olds said that getting people "to take more responsibility for themselves, rather than blaming others for their problems" would help a lot in dealing with race — 76 percent of whites surveyed, 82 percent of blacks, and 79 percent of Hispanics.

Statistics aside, it is sad when this kind of thinking earns me the title of "banana," just as it is sad when black youth disparage academic achievement as "acting white." Where do the guardians of race-consciousness draw the line between pride and prejudice? Between self-affirmation and self-segregation?

I am proud that my ancestors came from one of the world's great civilizations. I am proud that my grandfather served in the Chinese Air Force in WW II. I am proud to speak even my clumsy brand of Mandarin, and I feel blessed to be able to think idiomatically in Chinese, a language so much richer in nuance and subtlety than English. But I am first, foremost, and irreducibly American.

Granted, my conviction has yet to be tested by overt discrimination or, perhaps worse, by glass ceilings and quiet quotas. Granted, too, that "personal responsibility" can be code words for those with quite different agendas.

Still, if we are to reach a more workable consensus on race, the process must start with common interests. Young people, and especially young Progressives, know that the status quo isn't working. We have got to talk to each other and ask the basics: What were this country's intentions? What have been the results? How do we bridge the gap?

Naive, idealistic questions, I know. Yet somehow, in this year of disgust with politics as usual, I think that this country can start talking straight about race. My optimism may be misplaced. But it's an American thing — I hope you'll understand.

Political Correctness: On How to Begin the Discussion

by Manfred Stanley

It goes without saying that asking people who are in passionate disagreement to pause while you frame their conflict in new ways, is a thankless if not a presumptuous undertaking. "Get down here in the pits with us, if you want, but don't presume to tell us what we're 'really' arguing about." Foolhardy or sentimental as it may seem, it appears to me vital that we do cease fighting about political correctness long enough to find out what it is about the topic that we can agree on. Not doing that generates unnecessary pain.

In what follows I give the topic of political correctness a foundation which I hope will appeal to people who otherwise find themselves on very different sides of this debate(s). I have no quarrel with most of these "sides." Nor do I expect my perspective to serve as anything more ambitious than a framework within which to begin the discussion of political correctness. That it is only one among a number of possible frameworks goes without saying. But the vituperative, conspiratorial, and confrontational tone with which sides are often taken on this topic suggests a need to think about how best to "begin" the discussion so that there may be some shared sense of what the problem is for which one or another policy of "political correctness" is an alleged solution.

I

For various social and historical reasons, modern American society is experiencing an intensification of what can be called the manufacture of social strangers. Reasons for this include phenomena such as institutional specialization, cultural pluralism, desegregation of many sorts, bureaucratization, migration and immigration, sharp differences in social class-based life chances, and competition for increasingly scarce resources. Such forces have as one of their effects the collectively subjective experience of being increasingly surrounded by strangers, that is, by people who appear to each other as socially and psychically distant — alien, other, exotic, or threatening. (This is nothing new in American history; neither is debate about political correctness. What is new, I think, is the unacceptability of previous ways of dealing with strangerhood and the politics of

conformity, ways that range from government-sponsored "Americanization," through assimilation, segregation and internal exile, to slaughter. For reason of space, I shall restrict myself to the current scene.)

The rhetoric of political correctness seems to me a response to these conditions, but a response that should be viewed as part of a new form of politics emerging roughly since the 1960s in the U.S. To put that claim in context, we need to remember that, however we may wish to define the essence of politics (it's a controversial concept), we do experience politics in diverse forms. To provide a context for my suggestion that a new form of politics is emerging, let us quickly review some forms of politics that already exist in our society.

Most familiar is what has been called adversarial democracy, perhaps better known as liberal interest group politics. In this model, social interests regarded as competitive get articulated, negotiated, and mobilized into terms appropriate for partisan party politics (i.e., candidates, platforms, votes, victories, and mandates). Democratic participation is understood largely as detectable manifestations of public opinion (e.g., polls, votes, letters, lobbies, donations). All this is understood to proceed by way of controlled competition between organized and legitimate interest groups operating within mutually acceptable societal arrangements (e.g., the Constitution, the market, political parties, the media, and so forth).

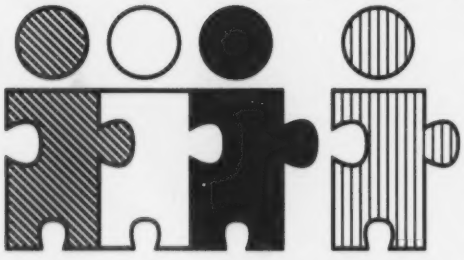
A second model of politics may be called elite public policy formation. Here the main actors are expert consultants, opinion leaders and media, think tanks, technical government agencies, academic public policy institutes, and foundations. In this model, politics is the responsible exercise of delegated or professional responsibility in the name of broadly defined public values that must be concretized under conditions of competition for scarce resources and uncertainty about relevant facts. Democratization here signifies the desire and the effort to bring the broader citizenry into this conversation about responsible public management. Policy elites are prone to worry that participation might get out of hand and overload the political system with unmanageable demands. They prefer that citizens participate through responsible formation and expression of public opinion. Currently, the concept of public opinion is broadening to include a pedagogy of value clarification designed to help citizens "work through" their opinions. The idea is to move from simple impulse to considered judgment so as to facilitate a more rational standard of public delegation.

A third model is politics understood as social movements. In this view, politics has to do with the frictions between ideals and actualities that generate the sparks of collective action. Here the rhetoric is about critique, amelioration, progress or restoration, perhaps revolu-

tion, and certainly about organization and solidarity. Social movements "draw" people into public life, give them a vocabulary, redeem their aimless subjectivity through the promise of objective historical "motion" toward some allegedly better world. Social movements can focus on finite interests within an undisturbed status quo, or they can mobilize revolt against part of or the whole of the status quo itself.

There are other models of politics on the American landscape, but the ones I have just reviewed perhaps will serve as a backdrop against which to sketch the newly emerging form of politics which I think best frames the current rhetoric of political correctness. I would like to call it the politics of empathy.

Why call this a new form of politics? Why not think of it as the latest stage of pluralism, the legalistic extreme of our long tradition of tolerance taking the forms of expanded civil rights, curriculum representation, nonstigmatic nomenclature, protected minority designations? But there seems more to it. The politics of empathy transcends tolerance in the name of a more rigorous standard of mutual comprehension. The popular term "inclusion" signifies a growing demand for policies that reduce the manufacture of social strangers. The live-and-let-live mood of tolerance insufficiently responds to this demand. In several new ways that deserve notice, the politics of empathy concerns itself primarily with the arts of inclusion.



In the new politics of empathy, the focus is on how linguistic habits, social institutions, interaction patterns, and physical arrangements are organized to include or exclude people from publicly valued solidarities such as citizenship, the "intelligent," the "respectable," the "clean," the "qualified," the "fit," even "humanity" itself. The rhetoric is largely about estrangement and reconciliation, classification and representation, power and "victimage." The partisanship connected with topics like political correctness, the curriculum "canon," the Columbus quincentennial and the like is not the same as that of political parties, public management, or even social movements. The test of solidarity seems less that of shared interest or issue consensus than it is respect for psychic traits and social behavior that supposedly answer to a norm of empathy.

II

Such an abstract account requires illustration from the subjective life of the spirit. Let me therefore close by sharing how, as a Jewish person, I have tried to think and feel my way toward what mutual empathy might require as regards the recently strained relations between some African-Americans and some Jews. (I resist totalizing either population into singular "communities.") There is no need to

review instances of the painful charges, stereotypes, attributions of conspiracy, and the like that have flowed in both directions. Let me rather set forth how this one individual has tried to think about the requirements of "empathy."

As a Jewish person, I think I am required to understand that my ethnic culture bears so many traits adaptive to American civilization (bookishness, commercial experience, normative emphasis on education, fountainhead of Christianity, etc.), that we simply are not a "minority" in the same sense as are African-Americans. Jews came to the U.S. as refugees, African-Americans as slaves. Jews stayed as citizens, merchants, scholars, and professionals. Many African-Americans stayed as slaves, and the lives and contributions of those who were freepersons were, until very recently, rendered invisible to other citizens by those responsible for telling the official stories of America. Still today, African-Americans are the object of what must seem to them as zoological debates about I.Q. measurements and definitions of intelligence, which is the idiom often hidden in back of the talk of "qualified blacks."

As a Jewish person, I think I am required to understand this well enough to comprehend why being despised as a "black" is not the same as being despised as a "Jew." Why not? Take as one example the occasional use made of the notorious forgery called "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" by those who want to engage in fantasies of secret Jewish power. Dangerous nonsense? Of course. Yet my sense of how to think about this was permanently altered one day when it occurred to me that, were I a member of a people that had been as decisively barred from the mainstream centers of power as have African-Americans, I might well feel gratified by having attributed to me a power-oriented conspiratorial fantasy like the Protocols. In a linguistic environment where phrases like "Jewish lawyer" and "Jew him down" imply — however offensively — attributions of talent, skill and power, I too might fail to appreciate why such fantasies as the Protocols are so terrifying to Jews. If my people's contributions to American culture were consistently ignored, truncated, stolen, caricatured or stigmatized, I too might experience Jewish talk of persisting "victimage" as disingenuous.

The politics of empathy imposes some requirements on African-Americans as well. For their part, African-Americans need to understand that the Jews now have a timeless relation to the Holocaust, a dramaturgy of rejection as total as is conceivable. Their imaginations need to be open to what it means for the Jews to have been cast as the all-purpose scapegoat of Western civilization, damned alike as capitalists and as communists, as the chosen people and as Christ killers, as refined snobs and as slovenly ghetto rats, as subversives and as sycophants, as the Elders of Zion and as toxic microbes in the bloodstream of race.

However different, the historical memories of Jews and African-

Americans are united in their experience of "Western civilization" as something more contradictory and lethal than the majestic "mainstream" so beloved by cultural conservatives. Yet while our critique of that civilization emanates from our resistance as people who have been colonized, enslaved or murdered, many aspects of that critique are in the name of values and institutions indisputably the product of Western civilization.

Merely noting such generalizations, of course, is an insufficient basis for final civic reconciliation across the boundaries of stereotype. There needs to be the kind of sustained mutual sensitivity to the distinct experiences I've tried briefly to illustrate here. This is what I mean by the politics of empathy. And this, to bring the point home, is where the rhetoric of political correctness ought really to begin — not free speech, not McCarthyism, not merit. It's about how things "sound" in the light of history. If we don't begin with that, then every inflection will become suspect until our sensibilities unravel into an infinity of "affronts," leaving in their wake a social landscape of formulas, lawsuits, and quotas. With the right beginning, we may dare to hope that other issues implicit in the rhetoric of political correctness will find their proper place.

Community and Group Identity: Fostering Mattering

by Daryl G. Smith

As campuses have engaged in the difficult dialogues surrounding diversity and multiculturalism, the concept of community emerges as one of the most elusive yet potentially important topics of discussion.

I see in the dialogues that occur, tremendous tension between those who call for a community of shared values and those who argue for the role of various groups on campus who support issues of diversity. The calls for community seem to have an important element of fear, often deep-seated, about "balkanization" on campus — the perception that student life on campus is highly segregated and isolated. At the same time, there is fear that hard-won efforts to create intellectual and support centers fostering diversity will be eradicated in some homogenized form of community. Some argue for the *Pluribus* and others for the *Unum* (Wong 1992, Cortés 1991, D'Souza 1991).

If institutions are to meet the challenge and the opportunities presented by increasingly diverse communities, it is clear that how we conceive of our institutions needs to be clarified. The angry rhetoric about balkanization (and even worse, "tribalism"), mostly focused on the existence and development of numerous support groups on campus, suggests that the choice must be between a unitary community of homogeneous "shared" values or isolation of individuals and groups. Framing the dialogue in this way ignores the segregated history of campuses in which groups were excluded or isolated by those in the majority, ignores the ways in which campuses continue to be inhospitable to those who are different, and serves to ignore the way in which support for both individual and group identities can create richly diverse communities that function effectively.

I begin with three assumptions: first, that institutions will need to have some core understandings that allow the institution to function; second, that learning occurs best when students are involved in their education through classes, subject matter, and institutional affiliations; and third, that the creation of multicultural communities has important implications for the society as well as to higher education.

Nevertheless, the form and function of involvement and the development of community must be understood as multidimensional

and complex. I introduce two conceptual frameworks that might inform campus discussions. The first concerns the role of groups and memberships in groups, and the second has to do with the concept of "mattering."

First however, we must not fall into the trap of imagining that this balkanization we see is a result of increased campus diversity. To do so, is to do what higher education has traditionally done — blame those who are newest to the institution for its weaknesses. The reality is that the life outside of the classroom for students has historically been quite segregated. The difference is that now groups can be visually identified by racial and ethnic group. The history of sororities and fraternities on campus has been one of exclusion. As a result many campuses have seen the development of black sororities and fraternities and Jewish sororities and fraternities — institutions that developed their own set of purposes and missions on campuses where segregation and discrimination were institutionally supported and condoned. Moreover, over the last number of decades, faculty life in departments, disciplines, and colleges has been characterized by balkanization, isolation, and "special interests." Higher education has not paid much attention to its role as a functioning community for many years. With increasing diversity, that neglect is now becoming more obvious and the increasing number of racial incidents on campus are becoming more alarming.

It is very problematic, therefore, to blame groups such as those organized by race and ethnicity for the current lack of institutional identity and community on campus. Given the history of alienation that has been the experience of virtually every nontraditional group on campus (Smith 1989) and given the lack of genuine community that has existed for years, campus support services and support groups have developed to provide "safe havens" and support for individuals and groups that have been marginalized, if not harassed, for their presence on campus.

Moreover, the existence of these groups does not in and of themselves represent a threat to achieving a campus community that can function and, indeed, can thrive on its diversity. Group membership itself is not the problem. The existence of such groups that have now grown because of the increasing diversity of student, faculty and staffs on campus, has not only been one of reaction to an alienating and discriminatory environment. Most healthy communities that we can think of are characterized by numerous subcommunities and functioning groups; individuals are likely to participate in any one of a number of them. Indeed, the strength of the community is most often an integration of meaningful involvement as an individual, as a participant in important group functions and only occasionally in functions of the entire community. The concept of a community and the concept of belonging do not require and, in fact, cannot be achieved

on any but the smallest of campuses solely by identification with the institution as a whole.

We are comfortable as academic communities thinking of the uniqueness of the individual and respecting the rights of the individual. We are also fond of calling on loyalty to the institution as a whole. The increasing diversification of our campuses calls on us to remember and to acknowledge the importance of group membership as well. Indeed, whether the campus has created residence hall groups, advising groups, athletic teams, organization by college units, affiliations by major, or supported fraternities and sororities, groups have long been an established part of lives on campus. That is true for faculty and staff as well. Faculty meetings are times for faculty perspectives to be discussed. Staff meetings provide opportunities for staff issues to be worked on. Religious groups in our communities have been available for other community-centered activities that validate interests and identities. Cultural groups gather to celebrate, to worship, to educate so that cultural identities are not lost and can contribute to the whole.

What then might a healthy community look like? Is there a place for shared values on the diverse campus of today and tomorrow? How might an authentic community rather than a rhetorical or romanticized community evolve?

The Role of Groups in Community

It is essential to acknowledge simultaneously the uniqueness of individuals, the ways in which some individuals share common identities, values, interests, or backgrounds with some others as part of groups, and the ways in which members of a specific community or institution are like all others in sharing that institutional membership (Bacchetti 1991). All organizations, campuses, communities consist of a variety of subgroups and subcultures. Each of us is a member of some groups based on mutual interests (e.g., religious affiliations, charitable work, intellectual area) or background (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation) or organizational needs (e.g., staff, faculty, student organizations, departments, divisions). At the same time, we are individuals and, at least for very successful organizations, we feel identified with others as part of the whole.

Having speeches about shared values and using metaphors of the family are rarely adequate. The reality is that identification with the institution and involvement in education will most often be developed through meaningful membership in a variety of groups on campus, including involvement in classes and with faculty.

Loyal alumni are often indebted to the institution through meaningful participation in activities and groups of one sort or another. While commencement, orientation, and football games are all opportunities for the collective whole to be acknowledged, even these rituals are often strengthened through the acknowledgment of subgroups that participate in them. Indeed, the important institutional contribu-

tion to feelings of involvement is the coherence provided by the mission of the institution (Kuh et. al, 1991).

All too often, however, the groups to which marginalized individuals have belonged are often themselves marginalized on campus. While fraternity and sorority life has often been seen as central and important, racial and ethnic groups, gay and lesbian groups, and women's groups have often been seen as marginal and peripheral to the institution. All too often, they are seen as threats. They are not part of the institution's purpose or mission.

One of the central issues, then, in the creation of a multicultural community is not to debate the appropriateness of campus groups who support diversity, but rather to ask about the ways the institution brings to the center the role these groups play on campus. If a large research university truly believes and acts as if the activities of the Asian-American groups on campus contribute to its mission of educating leaders for the society, then rather than fostering balkanization, the university is fostering the resources it has for building a multicultural community.

Multiple Memberships

Two of the most powerful vehicles for building on the strengths of campus groups are through individuals who hold memberships in multiple groups and through groups which interact. If I join a women's group on campus, I am not simply a member of that group interacting with other women. I am also a member of my department in which our concerns and interests as a faculty are developed. I also serve on numerous campus committees where I also share concerns and tasks with others. At its best, my work in any one of these groups is strengthened and informed by my work and participation in others. To the degree that each of these groups functions well, they serve to increase intergroup and interindividual connections and tasks. Moreover, because most of these groups have a task, they are more likely to create genuine collaborative efforts. All too often, however, groups do not function well — they do not encourage the full participation of those who are different. The result is that people retreat to the places where they matter and where their efforts can be worthwhile.

Mattering

Thus, in addition to the notion of multiple memberships, campus communities must become more reflective on how involvement and belonging are developed. If involvement is central to education and indeed to a well-functioning community, what does it mean? While Astin (1985) and Pace (1984) have developed definitions for involvement and there are indicators for assessing involvement based on levels of participation (Pascarella & Terenzini 1991), I'd like to suggest that the concept of mattering (Schlossberg 1989) is potentially useful because it articulates some of the characteristics that foster involvement and belonging and because it focuses not just

on behavior but on perception as well. Schlossberg details four major characteristics of mattering:

- Attention — The sense that one is noticed — whether by one's presence but often by one's absence.
- Importance — The belief that what we say or do has importance. Whether in the classroom, where what one says is acknowledged for a contribution, or in groups, where one's work or suggestions make a difference, a sense of importance can be generated.
- Ego extension — The feeling that other people will be proud or saddened by one's success or failures.
- Dependence — The sense that a person or the group is counting on us. Whether that comes as a function of having a part in a school play or a meaningful task in a group, the sense of others' dependence facilitates involvement and belonging.
- Appreciation — The view that our efforts are appreciated.

While mattering can be described in terms of the perceptions of an individual — the feeling that he or she matters — mattering can also be significant for groups. That is, not only can an individual matter, but a group can matter and be made to feel that it matters in the institutional community. It can be noticed, depended on, and appreciated.

If a campus is concerned about encouraging belonging and involvement, these five qualities would be good guides for behavior. All too often, the opposite behaviors are more common and thus promote the sense that one doesn't matter. If a student misses class or a meeting, nothing is said. Work efforts often do not generate a sense that others are dependent on its completion. If a student fails to complete the work, there is often little done to acknowledge concerned disappointment.

Conflict

Some of the fear that exists about balkanization might well be traced to the presence of conflict, anger, and tension on campus. While campuses may talk about celebrating diversity, there are times when conflicts of cultures, of values, of opinions, genuinely occur between groups — much as they occur among individuals, between faculty and administrators, etc. In other words, conflict is to be expected. The key indicator of a campus that is building a multicultural community is the degree to which conflict is used to inform or improve campus decisions, the degree to which processes are in place to "work through" the conflicts, and the degree to which persons from marginalized groups feel that they have a voice in resolving the conflicts. Moreover, in a pluralistic community, these processes, values, shared tasks, and goals must be worked out periodically so that the sense of participation in their creation is constantly renewed. This practice has been common in student life areas where the turnover of students requires that practices and values be

revisited periodically. Diverse communities and ones that are constantly changing also require that issues concerning mission and values be revisited.

If a conflict emerges, I certainly know that I matter if my point of view prevails. But clearly, that cannot be the only way to communicate that my perspective is important to a decision. Feeling that one matters does not emerge simply from the outcome. It also emerges from participation in a process that is genuinely open, participatory, and sincere about the different points of view that are emerging. Here campuses have an opportunity to develop processes that foster belonging and involvement — in a way crucial not only to the development of multicultural communities but also to the success of campus participants whether they be students, faculty, staff, or groups. The characteristics of mattering — attention, importance, ego extension, dependence, appreciation — can be built into decision making.

With 85 percent of the students in higher education participating in large public universities, involvement, belonging, and mattering will most likely occur through institutional subunits and groups who themselves are valued and matter in the institution. The question, then, of building community is not one of de-emphasizing difference — it is, rather, acknowledging that we are members of multiple groups and that within and between these groups our connection with an institution is developed.

Implications for Practice

1. Encouraging group membership

It is essential to strengthen the role of groups on campus and support the efforts of groups that have been traditionally marginalized but that support the efforts to create a multicultural community.

2. Encouraging multiple group memberships and intergroup work

The health of the community is reflected in the degree to which individuals participate in multiple groups bringing students, staff, and faculty together in a variety of ways and the degree to which intergroup work is facilitated and practiced.

3. Developing the means by which individuals and groups can genuinely matter in a class, on campus, in residence halls, in groups, etc.

To feel that one matters is generated by the behavior of individuals toward other individuals and groups and is most significant when institutional members assist in helping students feel that they matter.

4. Developing the processes by which conflicts will be worked through

Conflict cannot be avoided and in fact can be helpful in identifying important issues. Developing the means to bring out issues and work through them at all levels of the institution needs to be a focus of institutional efforts.

5. Developing a process by which the mission of the institution and the implication of that mission for all members of the community is discussed and articulated through genuine participation

Again — shared values or working values — cannot be taken for granted; nor can they be too broadly stated. They must be discussed, articulated, and revisited periodically, in ways that minimize foreclosing on the benefits of diversity.

The current debate between community and diversity is a false one. It serves to polarize groups and jeopardize the many more opportunities to build involvement that diversity on campus brings. Involvement and belonging can be developed through the development of multiple group memberships and through participation that matters.

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Under the Skin

by John Lahr

Anna Deavere Smith is a lithe, clear-eyed, forty-two-year-old actress and Stanford theatre professor who has done a great thing. She has gone into this noisy republic and, combining the editorial skill of the biographer and the precision of the mimic, has brought onto the American stage the voices of the unheard. She is offering, in what she calls "a parade of color," a new framework from which to assess race and class in American culture. She is not writing polemical theatre but, better, doing theatre politically. "It's crucial that whites in the audience find points of identification," she wrote in a memo to one of the dramaturges of her most recent piece, *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* which is at L.A.'s Mark Taper Forum until July 18 and opening late October at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton. "Points of empathy *with themselves*," she added. "To create a situation where they merely empathize with those less fortunate than themselves is another kind of theatre. . . . My political problem is this: Privilege is often masked, hidden, guarded. This guarded, fortressed privilege is exactly what has led us to the catastrophe of nondialogue in which we find ourselves. I'm not talking about economic privilege. I'm talking about the basic *privilege* of white skin which is the foundation of our rare vocabulary."

Smith wants to breach this fortress by including both people of color and their unofficial language in the public debate. She speaks heart to heart with her subjects who, in turn, speak memorably to us. There is no buttonholing, no buzz of sound-bites, nothing from the bargain basement of sociology. Instead, like the Billie Holiday song, she asks heartache to come in and sit down. That she succeeds completely is a testament to the integrity both of her performance and of the complex, often poetic feelings she coaxes out of her subjects. *Twilight*, which distills more than 170 interviews into an hour and three-quarters, attempts, through 27 narratives, to take the pulse of Los Angeles between the Rodney King incident, of March 3, 1991, and the federal trial that ended this April with the conviction of two L.A. policemen for violating King's civil rights. The play — the fourteenth installment of a series she calls "On the Road: A Search for American Character," which came to national attention in 1991 with her award-winning "Fires in the Mirror," about Brooklyn's Crown Heights riots that year — is a bold, prodigious democratic gesture that calls to mind Walt Whitman's dictum "The United

States themselves are essentially the greatest poem." Whitman's great poem, of course, invoked the voices of America but celebrated only himself. Smith, who speaks verbatim the words of the voiceless, is really writing a poem with them in public. In this heroic undertaking, she is conducting one of the most sophisticated dialogues about race in contemporary America.

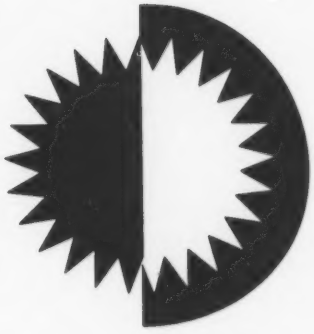
When the lights come up on Smith, the eyes struggle to find her amid the clutter of chairs and tables strewn in some surrealist pattern around the thrust stage. ("Anna's always saying 'It's not domestic. It's not domestic,'" says the director, Emily Mann, who puts Smith neatly through her paces.) The epic nature of the piece is reinforced by the large, undecorated gray back wall, at the center of which is a recess that becomes variously, a TV split screen, a hodgepodge of graffiti, an office window. Onstage, barefoot and with her hair pulled back, to make the changes of costume and sex easier, Smith somehow neutralizes herself in the task of giving shape to the multifarious voices of others. (In rehearsal, with earphones on, she literally lets the characters take her over, playing back their unedited talk and speaking their words until images and gestures emerge from the rhythms.) "As a student learning Shakespeare, I became fascinated with how the spoken word works in relationship to a person's psychology," she says. "It's the *manipulation* of the words that creates character, not just the words, not just the emotion. My earliest exercise was to take Queen Margaret's speech from *Richard III* — a vicious speech — and say it over and over again. I did it for three hours. I felt that I'd entered this awful world and this strange woman. I was completely taken over. That became my point of reference for acting. I kept wondering why that wasn't happening in more realistic plays. Why the words didn't really hold. In Shakespeare, the words held not just the psyche of the person but also the psyche of the time."

By demonstrating that to be "literature" a narrative doesn't have to be "educated," *Twilight* goes right to the heart of the issues of race and class. "The process of creating literature is natural. It isn't dependent on a pen and paper. It's a person using their voice and the making of words to come to consciousness of what they know," she says, pointing to the print on my newspaper. "This little thing on a page is just a capsule. The real magic happens when the word hits your breath."

Certainly in her case it does. I saw *Twilight* twice, and it was thrilling to watch different parts of the Los Angeles community face their reflection. At the first performance — a truncated one, which was part of the Taper's Young Audience Program — things didn't look good for Anna Deavere Smith. A rambunctious audience of more than 700 students from 11 L.A. high schools began laughing at the TV images of looting which open the section she was about to perform. But Smith soon tamed them. As Julio Menjivar — one of

the innocent Latinos with no criminal record who were nonetheless rounded up by the police during the riot — she was describing in Spanish the police abuse, than suddenly stopped and said to the audience, "I don't think I should say what the police said. Your teachers will mind." The kids shouted back, "No they won't!" So Smith said, "Get up, motherf___ ! Get up!" What had started in laughter ended in a standing ovation. The next day, a predominantly white and paying adult audience also rose to its feet at the finale. "She's the closest thing to a professional athlete I know," the Taper's producing director, Robert Egan, told me. "There's a willingness to go out into the field of play and just do it. She's got a uniquely, instinctive instrument. She also learns as much dialogue as anybody I've ever seen."

Twilight is both a metaphor for a scarred city and the tag of one of Smith's characters, Twilight Bey, who helped to organize the L.A. gang truce, and whose poetic interpretation of his name gave Smith the idea for her title. "I can't forever dwell in darkness," he said to her of the limbo his name signifies to him. In Smith's script, for reasons of rhythm and memorization, the words are printed like poetry, falling unpunctuated down the page. Here, for example, is Bey, a kind of night watchman of his grim neighborhood, discoursing about his name:



So twilight
is
that time
between day and night
limbo
I call it limbo
so a lot of times when I've brought up
  ideas to my homeboys
they say
Twilight
that's before your time
that's something you can't do now
when I talked about the truce back in 1988
that was something they considered
  before its time
yet
in 1992
we made it
realistic
so to me it's like I'm stuck in limbo
like the sun between night and day.

But in its ruthless probing of both the language and the life of its subjects Smith's piece embodies another aspect of twilight. "The twilight hours are a time when it's harder to see, but they become a more creative time, because you have to participate more," Smith told me. "We might see more because we have to look harder." Her show looks for no scapegoats and offers no solutions. "It'd be horri-

ble to give an answer," she says, "because there hasn't been an examination."

Twilight is the beginning of the inquiry. It bears theatrical witness to the barbarity not just of violence but of envy, which in Los Angeles drives both rich and poor crazy. Smith shows people struggling to make coherent their sense of rage and pain. Over the phone, a former Black Panther activist socks it to a militant about armed struggle: "If you just want to die, and become a poster, go ahead and do that." A Korean wife tells of hospital visits to her husband, who has been partially lobotomized by a rioter's bullet fired at point-blank range. "At night, and all the day long, and I spend all my time and in my heart for him," she says, in halting English. Almost all of Smith's subjects struggle to get to the point. Smith tracks her subjects through their quirky syntax and their repetitions. "The process of getting to the point is where I think character lives," she says. "Shoshana Felman, in 'The Literary Speech Act,' says that people talk and talk in order to have an experience of themselves. The sludge is the journey to understanding. The sludge is the self." In *Twilight*, out of the groping for words Smith creates a sense of spiritual static. For example, here (with punctuation added) a Hollywood talent agent, trying alternately to deny and to admit that winning in the American sweepstakes means somebody else's losing, ties himself up in the kind of semantic knots that David Mamet would envy:

> But maybe — not maybe but, uh — the system plays unequally. And the people who were the "they" who were burning down the Beverly Center had been victims of the system. Whether well-intentioned or not, somebody got short shrift, and they did. And I started to absorb a little guilt and say, uh, I deserve. . . . I deserve it. I don't mean to get my house burned down. The "us" did not in — not (I like to think) — not intentionally. . . . But maybe so. There's just. . . . It's so awful out there.

The agent never finishes his thought. To Smith, who is fond of quoting to her students Allen Ginsberg's "The breath is the inspiration," the agent's stammering is a metaphor of his moral stalemate. "I'm not interested in who's responsible," she says. "I'm interested in catching this particular agent, who wears Armani suits and is a neat guy. Where is he? That inability to express is itself a reality."

Listening is one of *Twilight's* major unspoken dramas. In making the audience hear the characters, Smith is also showing it how to listen to the strangers in its midst. She creates a climate of intimacy by acknowledging the equality of the other. She waits out the anger. She accepts the contradictoriness. She cleverly notes the body language. And sometimes even her right to listen is tested. Angela King, the aunt of Rodney King, says at the end of her interview, "You understand what I'm sayin' now. You do? Alright." "That 'Alright' is her allowing me to listen. I'm passing the test," Smith explains. "There is also the issue of 'Am I worthy to hear them? I like it that in some

cases the dance that you have to do to get to the position of being allowed to listen is difficult. That's why I'm interested in a character like Big Al, who says to me, 'You got to live here to express this point, you got to live here to see what's goin' on.'"

The information for which Smith listens is not facts but the inner conflicts of the soul and how they express themselves in everyday speech. There's no mistaking the former L.A. Police Chief Daryl Gates' slip of the tongue when he refers to Rodney King as "Rodney Thing." "You can't appreciate the blossom without the sludge," she says, and her extraordinary interview with Reginald Denny proves her point. Denny, who was pulled from the cab of his truck and nearly beaten to death, became the media's totem of ghetto barbarity; his beating but not his rescue by four blacks got the TV coverage. Smith follows Denny's meandering vacuity — "I didn't usually pay too much attention of what was going on in California, or in America, or anything" — which leads to a moment of eloquence: "How does one say that someone saved my life? How does a person. . . . How do I express enough thanks for someone risking their neck? And then I was kind of — I don't know if afraid is the word — I was just a little awkward meeting people who saved me. Meeting them was not like meeting a stranger but it was like meeting a buddy. There was a weird common thread in our lives." Smith says that Denny's phrase brought something into focus for her and her desire to dramatize difference in the community. "What I'm offering — and I never started thinking about it until Reginald Denny's piece — is a kind of an aggressive response to the damage the search for sameness has done for us. We're never going to be the same. It wouldn't be the worst thing in the world for whites to acknowledge it. Then we really could say, 'We have this weird common thread,' which is racism."

The discrepancy between surface and seriousness is brilliantly pointed up by Jon Stolzberg's "videowall," with its elegant use of iconic L.A.-riot reportage ("image looters" is what the South Central locals dubbed the media), which never approaches the depth of discourse of Smith's speakers. We hear from Theresa Allison, whose nephew was murdered and whose son is in jail, how the L.A.P.D. fakes drive-by killings and sometimes eliminates a project youth by merely picking him up and dropping him into enemy-gang territory. Angela King remembers the young Rodney King standing up to his ankles in a stream, so alert and agile that he could catch trout with his hands: "I said, Boy, you sure you ain't got some African in you? Ooh, yeah, I'm talkin' 'bout them wild Africans not one them well-raised ones like with a fish hook." A juror in the first trial, which cleared the L.A.P.D. of any wrongdoing in Rodney King's beating, cries in Smith's presence, recounting public reaction to the decision: "One of the most disturbing things — and a lot of the jurors said that — the thing that bothered them that they received in the mail — more than anything else, more than the threats — was a letter from

the K.K.K. saying we support you and if you need our help, if you want to join our organization we'd welcome you into our field. And we all just were — *No*!" A juror from the federal trial agreed to talk to Smith after her lawyer saw a preview of *Twilight*. Her interview, restricted by contract from quotation or publication, is one of the most fascinating of the evening — a hilarious and touching account of the back-room frustration in which the deadlocked jurors (one Hispanic, two blacks, and nine whites) had to face their own racial guilt before they could finally find two of the policemen guilty of violating King's civil rights.

Twice in the play, characters refer to waking up. Elvira Evers, a cashier whose life was saved by the elbow of her unborn baby when she was hit by a stray bullet, concludes, "So it's like — open your eyes. Watch what is goin' on." And Reginald Denny is aroused almost to a fury at the thought of racism as he says, "I just want people to wake up." *Twilight* inspires to disenchant a community whose major industry is the business of enchantment. "How do we encourage people to grow up?" Smith wondered out loud to me. "Will there ever be a sobering moment?" She then confided a dream she had had the night before.

In her dream, Smith went into a hospital room, where she was alone with a Japanese man whose head was shaved and who had a perpendicular incision on the front of his forehead. She realized that the man didn't know what had happened to him and was terrified. "This is the place where I relate to Reginald Denny," she said of the dream. "It's a very terrifying place, to tell you the truth. It's a place that has to do — it's very, very deep — with coming into consciousness. Of the *terror* of coming into consciousness, whatever that consciousness is. So, for me, my point of connection with Denny is when he's in the hospital, not knowing who's there and having to put together why he's there." Smith's eyes shone suddenly with tears. Her voice cracked. "I guess that's what makes me so sad about America. I know we haven't yet come to consciousness. To me, there is something *very, very* dark and *very, very* disturbing about the inevitability of having to wake up after this *horrible, horrible* accident, which is racism. The only way to master this fear of coming into consciousness is by coming into the consciousness of others, mimicking how other people did it, because it's terrifying to come into my own."

In its judicious daring, *Twilight* announces that a multicultural America is here and functioning and is capable of noisy but brilliant collaboration. Smith herself was struck by the reality of this diversity as she watched on the TV monitors of the Taper lobby her many-hued dramaturges discussing the play with a preview audience. The next day, she sent them a note, which read, in part:

> In my life, in this moment
> you are proof
> that

"a change's gotta come"
has come.

Her victory is hard won, and theatre throughout America is better for it. *Twilight* goes some way toward reclaiming for the stage its crucial role as a leader in defining and acting out that ongoing experiment called the United States.

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DIALOGUE TO CHANGE CONFLICTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

by Harold H. Saunders and Randa Slim

Deep-rooted human tensions and conflicts — ethnic, racial, religious — are not ready for mediation, negotiation, or referenda. They require a different approach.

That approach is sustained dialogue designed to change conflictual relationships over time. This kind of dialogue is more than just good conversation and less than a structured negotiation. Sustained dialogue is a political process in which participants probe the dynamics of even the most destructive relationships and gradually develop a capacity together to design steps to change them.

Dialogue by its very nature provides the context for developing and changing relationships. The pages that follow describe a process of dialogue that grows and deepens through five stages. People decide to engage because they feel a need to build or change a relationship to resolve a problem that hurts their interests. They come together to talk — to map the elements of those problems and the relationships responsible for creating and dealing with them. They probe specific problems more deeply and uncover the dynamics of underlying relationships and even begin to see ways into those relationships to change them. Together, they design a scenario of human and political steps to be taken in the political arena to change those relationships. Finally, they devise ways of putting that scenario into action. By the end of the dialogue, they have moved from wariness of each other to a close working and even personal relationship with insight into how to share their experience more widely.

These stages are not rigid; one does not fully end before the next begins. Participants move back and forth across the stages. But the framework suggested provides a checklist of the work that needs to be done if the dialogue is to have a sense of purpose and direction and if it is to produce change in conflictual relationships.

STAGE ONE: DECIDING TO ENGAGE

The *purposes* at this stage — before people ever come to the table — are: (1) to reach agreement that they will meet and (2) to produce understanding on the nature, purpose, and broad ground rules of the dialogue. Four *questions* must be addressed: (1) Who will take the initiative? (2) Who are the participants? (3) How can resistance to meeting and talking with the adversary be overcome?

(4) Under what conditions will the dialogue take place?

Who Will Take the Initiative?

A dialogue can be initiated in one of two ways: either an interested group outside the field of tension can try to bring people together, or concerned individuals from the communities in tension can seek out like-minded people in the other community.

A so-called "third party" normally begins by talking in depth with many individuals directly involved to gather knowledge about the interests, feelings, and positions of each group. This effort is often called a fact-finding mission. The products are identifying individuals who might participate in the dialogue and defining tentatively key problems and how they will be discussed.

Sometimes a person or a group inside one community takes the initiative. The advantage of this approach is that participants would then take ownership of the dialogue from the beginning.

The identity of the convenor or convenor team will make a difference. If there is a third party, a team with broad experience across communities will bring to the discussions different perspectives and impart a neutral character to any third-party intervention in the dialogue process.

Who Are the Participants?

At the beginning the participants are normally individuals who are respected in their communities and are listened to by top leaders and decision-makers. Later, they will seek ways to draw a larger number of people in their community into dialogue.

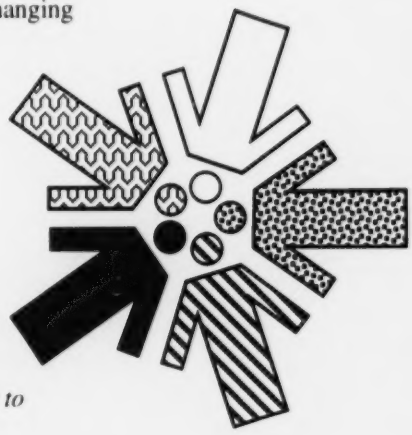
Usually, participants are individuals who have concluded that the present situation hurts their interests to an extent that is becoming intolerable. They are ready to say, "Enough!" and to risk working toward a solution, but they need to enlarge the credibility of their perspective in the community. (Learning what brings people to this conclusion in a situation is critical.) In other instances, the third party must try to precipitate a sense of need for dialogue by dramatizing the costs of letting the situation drag on or by offering inducements to meet.

Participants must have some kind of political "permission" to engage. Or they must have the stature or courage to engage despite opposition. A third party can help create legitimacy.

How wide a range of views should be represented? Should extremists be included? Normally, those willing to participate fall in the middle of a spectrum. A dialogue probably needs to start there and work its way toward the edges of the spectrum like a stretching rubber band. Eventually, extremists may need to be contained by as broad a group as possible.

One might start by talking with two or three dozen people but for the initial dialogue select seven or eight who represent main perspectives in the communities, noting that there are divisions within

groups as well as between them. It may not be possible to enlist a fully representative group at first, but it may be better to begin than to seek perfection. Eventually, the aim is to spread the dialogue experience in the community to lay foundations for changing relationships.



Overcoming Resistance to Dialogue

The task is to persuade the parties in the conflict to talk with each other. The challenge is to cause people to see a long-term problem as warranting a systematic dialogue before it reaches a violent stage.

The situation seems calm now. Would you be content to leave it to your children this way? Or do you see tensions under the surface that could erupt? Should an effort be made now to try to head them off? How do others feel? Why don't people want to talk? What are they afraid of?

If there are no overt hostilities, people often deny there is a problem. "But we do talk," they say. Groups may have learned in their own self-interest to work together in common projects or workplaces but carefully avoid talking about underlying tensions in their relationships in order not to disrupt minimal necessary cooperation. The challenge is to generate realization that they are not really talking about problems in relationships that cause problems.

If you think seriously about present relationships, could you cite experiences of underlying tensions? Could you tell some stories about relationships? Or do you feel that no tensions exist? Can you explain what kind of talking goes on now? Does it go to the heart of the underlying relationships that cause tensions? Or does it skirt around them?

When tensions have risen or already erupted in some way, persons on both sides may believe that time is on their side or will reduce tensions. The problem is how to convince people that tensions usually deepen rather than disappear if not dealt with.

What are the costs of continuing tension to you and your community? Does anyone gain from this tension? If so, who and how? What will your children face if relationships continue as they are?

Later, if tensions are already escalating, some might feel that they have already invested too much in pressing their positions to give up now. Talking to the other community could even be seen as "selling out" in some way. The question is how to cause people to see that they are interdependent with the other community, and that it serves their own interests to engage in a systematic dialogue with them.

How much longer can this go on? When is it time to say

"enough"? Do you believe there are individuals in the other community who want to talk? Are there influential people in your community who would like to explore ways of dealing with underlying tensions and improving relationships? Wouldn't the potential benefits of quiet exploration outweigh the costs? What kind of "permission" would you need in order to explore the other community's views? From whom do you gain this permission?

Under What Conditions Will the Dialogue Take Place?

It is important to explain that the dialogue will take place in a space owned by all and safe for all. Often, meeting in a neutral site will help participants feel safe. To give the dialogue purpose and direction, the primary condition to which the parties must agree is that the purpose is to probe for underlying elements of tense or conflictual relationships between them that must be changed to improve conditions or resolve conflict. Certain ground rules should be agreed:

- Participants represent themselves and reflect their views in their communities; they do not formally represent their organizations.
- Participants will interact civilly, listen actively to each other, and allow each to present views fully. One can set aside a time at the beginning of every meeting, during which participants air grievances. It is a period of "psychological dumping." Then the talk is as analytical as possible.
- Participants observe time limits on statements to allow genuine dialogue.
- Nothing said in the dialogue is repeated outside that room.

Transition and Product

Precipitating a decision to meet may require a third-party invitation, a traumatic event, or a conciliatory gesture by one of the groups. Devising the precipitating event may be complex.

The *product* at the end of Stage One is an informal agreement among prospective participants to engage in a dialogue in a certain way for particular purposes. The agreement will set time, place, convening authority, financial responsibility, and ground rules.

STAGE TWO: MAPPING THE RELATIONSHIP TOGETHER

The *purposes* at the beginning of the dialogue itself are: (1) to get out on the table the main problems that affect the relationships among the participants and (2) to be sure the group identifies all of the significant relationships that are responsible for creating these problems and would need to be changed to resolve them. We speak of "mapping" — or drawing a mental picture — of the whole complex of relationships involved in the important problems participants face.

When a group first comes together, it is important to reiterate, consolidate, and affirm the agreement that was reached in the previ-

ous stage. The purpose, agenda, and ground rules should be reaffirmed by the whole group together. It is particularly important — because it is not the usual way of talking about issues — to restate the dual agenda — talking about both the problems participants face and the relationships underlying them.

Mapping the Problems and the Relationships Underlying Them

It may be desirable as a group sits down to spend some time in which participants would begin getting to know each other in the context of the problem:

In introducing yourselves, could each of you please share with the group some experience you have had with the relationships we are going to discuss?

After substantive introductions, the dialogue might begin with three questions:

What are the main problems you face and would like to resolve?
What groups are affected by these problems?
How do these problems affect the interests of the group with which you identify?
What are the important relationships responsible for creating these problems that would need to be changed in order to resolve them?

The questions should vary to address the specific problems the group faces. But their aim is to identify and define both the critical problems and the relationships underlying them. That dual agenda cannot be repeated too often because it is not a familiar one.

It is also essential to talk about interests — not just the objectively defined interests but the underlying explanations of why something is important to a person or group.

Why do you really care? Why is that so important to your group?

Through most of this discussion, as participants lay out what is on their minds, the moderator will play a relatively permissive role — except for encouraging participants to respect the right and time of each to speak. But on two points — probing deeply into interests and identifying underlying relationships — the moderator will need to press harder.

Shifting Gears: Glimpsing the Future

When a relatively full picture of the problems and relationships has emerged, it will be useful to begin shifting gears to bring this stage to a close. One way of starting this shift is to begin focusing on the future with questions such as the following:

What kind of relationships would better serve your interests?
What would you have to change to create those relationships?
What would you want or need to preserve from the present situation? Why?
Who else would have to be involved if you were to make those

changes?

A necessary step toward defining the problems the group wants to work on is to identify the obstacles that stand in the way of moving in the direction that interests dictate.

Given the kind of relationships you would like to create, what are the main obstacles standing in the way of moving in that direction? Let's list them.
Given the direction in which you would like relationships to move and the barriers in the way, how would you define the main obstacles you face?

Hope is part of a present situation. These questions are not intended to throw the group into focusing on solutions. They simply start thinking about the costs of the present situation. Obstacles are also part of the present situation; identifying them helps define key problems.

Transition: Focusing the Agenda and Overcoming Resistance

The *transition* to the next stage begins when the group is asked:

Given the problems you have identified, what are the problems you most need to work on in greater depth?
Given the realities of the situation, which problem should you work on first? What is the logic behind the order in which you have placed them?

In this stage, the purpose has been to map the field — to identify a broad range of problems and relationships that must be changed to deal with those problems. This has been a survey; that is why it is called "mapping." In contrast, in the next stage the group will take *one problem at a time* and probe it deeply and systematically. There will be more time to discuss the substance of the problem and more time to probe deeply into the dynamics of the relationships responsible for creating that problem. In the next stage the moderator will play a more active role in keeping the dialogue to the point and in helping the group to ask itself the difficult probing questions.

Overcoming resistance. Much more difficult than reaching agreement on specific problems for focusing the next stage of the dialogue is overcoming remaining resistance to a sustained dialogue on problems that participants know will involve their reaching out to others in ways that acknowledge the legitimacy of some other views or make themselves vulnerable. It is one thing to agree on subjects to be discussed but quite another to be ready to talk about those subjects in a way that shows understanding of the other's feelings and way of thinking — or reveals one's own. Overcoming that resistance is critical to the transition to Stage Three. Two possible approaches:

Option 1 — A "walk through history."

One approach is to stop and deal with the resistance head-on. Each participant tells her/his own story.

Tell us how the problem began for your group. Who was responsible?

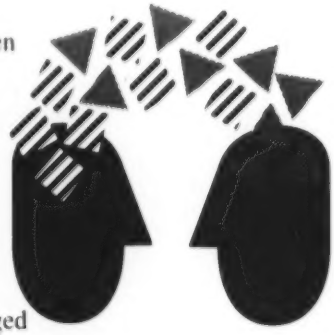
Can you tell us how your group thinks the other group would tell this story?

The purpose is to begin a change in perceptions and stereotypes: "I didn't know that's how it looked to you. . . . We should forgive each other and start our lives again." This approach tackles resistance at its heart and can open the door to changed relationships, but it risks bogging down in recriminations and might even trigger an outburst of emotion that could destroy the dialogue.

Option 2 — Address obstacles through concrete problems.

An alternative is to march ahead with discussion of practical problems identified but actively seek out and use the moments when feeling might be dealt with constructively to probe a particular obstacle to dialogue.

The Products of Stage Two



First is the moderator's judgment that resistance has been sufficiently overcome and that the quality of the dialogue has begun to change — that the participants can talk with each other instead of just stating views and that they show readiness to settle down to serious discussion of how to deal with specific problems, one at a time.

Second is a clear definition and understanding of concrete problems to be discussed in depth one at a time. These are problems that — if discussed in detail — will reveal the dynamics of the relationships that must be changed if the problems are to be dealt with.

STAGE THREE: PROBING THE DYNAMICS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS

The *purpose* in this stage is to generate the will within the parties to change the conflictual relationships so as to deal with the problems that face them.

The *tasks* are: (1) to shift the mode of discourse from explanation of each side's position to genuine dialogue, where parties talk with each other, respond to each other, and ask each other clarifying questions; (2) to probe the problems that participants have agreed they most need to work on and to use that analysis as a vehicle for illuminating the dynamics of the relationships that are responsible for creating the problem and that must be changed if it is to be dealt with; and (3) by asking the participants to assess where present relationships are leading, to create conditions in which participants generate the will to change the situation and muster the determination to design ways of changing the destructive relationships that stand in the way of change.

The moderator will play a more directive role. For example,

strong feelings may flare up. The moderator should control some, and choose others to probe the dynamics of the interactions involved. The moderator will also need to discipline the dialogue to keep it focused on the dual agenda — one problem at a time and the relationships that create the problem and could change it.

Working with the Agenda to Probe Relationships

Confirming the agenda. An agenda was agreed in general terms at the end of the last session. It is a good idea to confirm, revise, or develop that agenda more precisely.

Would someone restate the problems the group agreed to work on? Why are they important? Do changes need to be made? Are you agreed?

Can we list the subjects to be discussed in some logical order? Do we agree to stick with each subject long enough to reach understanding?

Probing problems and relationships. Once an agenda of two or three problems is agreed, the dialogue turns to them one at a time. Dialogue begins with *the problem.*

How would each of you define the elements of this problem?

How have you or your group contributed to these problems?

What changes could you or your group initiate unilaterally in order to bring about some change?

How does it affect your group's interests — what you really care about?

Is there enough harm to interests to cause an interest in change? If so, what needs must be met? If not, how can the situation be managed to minimize harm?

What directions might constructive change take? What are the options? What are the advantages and disadvantages for each group?

Where could you find common ground in moving toward a new situation?

To this point, the talk is similar to a thoughtful public deliberation about a serious subject that affects a community — with one significant difference: The participants come from communities in conflict that fear, hate, despise, dehumanize, and sometimes kill each other. More than in most situations, no problem will be constructively dealt with unless the conflictual relationships are changed. In *probing relationships* that underlie the problems, there will not be time or patience for a complete analysis, but the moderator can use questions such as these to help participants probe:

What are the main groups involved in the problem we are discussing?

From your group's perspective, can you describe how other groups see themselves? What experience and heritage have produced their self-images?

Could you describe the other groups' interests in your own words? Can you see why those interests are important?
How do these groups normally interact? Do they fight, bargain, posture, talk? Can you explain why?
What groups seem powerful to you? If power is the capacity to influence events, who is really powerful? Why? What is power in this situation?
Do you sense any way in which parties to some of these relationships observe certain limits in dealing with each other?
How does each group perceive the other? Why do you think that is the case? In what ways does your group hold others responsible for your situation? Do you see ways of changing those perceptions?
Do these groups have any significant common interests? What are they?

Assessing Relationships and Their Direction: Generating the Will to Change

Generating the will to change is the final goal in Stage Three. One way to move toward a judgment that change is necessary and worth the cost is to lead participants to the judgments that what should be done cannot be done as long as the present state of relationships persists and that the costs of not changing are greater. This can be done by bringing the group to a pause for an assessment of where present relationships are taking the situation.

Where is the situation going? The moderator must ask the group to imagine how the present situation might unfold. The participants could visualize a number of paths along which the situation might develop if nothing is done in the interim to reverse the current trends. This usually involves an assessment of the costs to each party in each case. The moderator does not require the participants to agree on the likelihood of any of these developments. It is essential that each hear the other's perspectives about how the current situation might unfold.

Given the present interactions, where is the situation going?
How would each line of development affect each group's interests?
How would each line of development affect the capacities of each group to deal effectively with this problem — or to work with other groups where outcomes depend on collaboration?
Can you live with what you see developing? Or do you see a serious need for change? What would you be willing to do to promote a desire for change among all?

Is change possible? What would it require? This dialogue should have led to thought about the consequences of continuing the present situation. If a will to change seems to be emerging, the next questions will be:

Are others interested in change? Why? Is there some common

ground?

What changes in relationships would be needed to move to the kind of community/country that would deal with this problem and better serve your interests?

What changes in the mix of elements in these relationships would be needed?

What does each group do to perpetuate this situation?

What can you change in your own group's actions?

Transition and Product: Is There a Will to Change?

The task in bringing Stage Three to closure and moving to the next level of dialogue is to consolidate the group's experience in genuine dialogue so as to get participants thinking together in an operational way. At some point, it will be necessary to determine whether the group has the will to take that next step and begin talking together about how to design change.

Since you seem to feel that some change in the way your groups relate to each other would serve the interests of most groups, would you be willing to think together about steps each group could take to make cooperation possible?

If you would consider such a task, we would begin our next session with a working agenda to help you design a series of interactive steps.

If not, why is it still difficult for your group to change?

The *products* of this stage are: (1) the experience of an increasingly direct and probing dialogue that deepens and begins to change relationships within the group; (2) a new body of insight into the perceptions, feelings, and conceptual frameworks of others; (3) a precise outline of how present relationships between the parties need to change in order to produce conditions that might lead to a more desirable solution of the problem; and (4) above all, a judgment that the costs of continuing the present situation and relationships outweigh the costs of trying to change them. The critical product — and Stage Three cannot end without it — is the *generation of a will to change.*

STAGE FOUR: EXPERIENCING RELATIONSHIPS — BUILDING SCENARIOS

The *purpose* in this stage is to bring members of the group to the point of thinking together about how to generate the change they would like to see happen. Figuratively, they are no longer sitting across the table talking to each other; they are sitting side by side to design ways to change relationships they all agree need to be changed to deal with problems in the interests of each.

The Vehicle for Change: Scenario-Building

In a sense, the group becomes a microcosm of the larger relationships involved. The vehicle for change is posing a task that requires participants to design steps to change relationships between their

groups. By thinking together about how to change a situation and the relationships that cause it, they themselves experience what the relationship would have to become in the larger society if the desired changes were to be accomplished.

If the group is small, it may stay together for this exercise, but it is often desirable to divide even a small group into still smaller groups in order to foster the experience of thinking together and engaging in deeper discussion of obstacles to change.

Establishing the starting point can stem from previous dialogue.

At the end of the last session, we asked: What changes in relationships are needed to deal with the problems we have discussed? Would someone review the responses? Do they need to be refined?

With the starting point established, participants are then asked to perform three tasks: *First*, they are to *identify obstacles* to moving in the direction they have determined that they want to pursue. They will certainly identify tangible obstacles such as the positions of opposing parties, the lack of resources, the opposing objectives of different groups, the inflamed emotions in a heated conflict; but they will also need to probe beneath those to be sure they have brought to the surface the underlying human dimension of those obstacles — the fears, the historic grievances, the misperceptions, the stereotypes, the wounds from the past, the human interests. Often these are greater obstacles to change than objective components of a situation for which there may well be technical solutions.

What are the main obstacles to changing relationships in the ways needed?

Are those the real obstacles or are there also other deeper-rooted obstacles?

Are you addressing the fears, misperceptions, grievances, animosities?

Second, once the group has developed a full list of obstacles, they need to develop a parallel *list of steps that could help erode or remove those obstacles*. Some of these may be official steps. Others may be steps taken by nongovernmental organizations. All of them are steps designed for the purpose of removing the obstacles identified. These steps will include concrete measures to change conditions that one group finds unjust or harmful. The steps also need to include ways of dealing with misperceptions and underlying human fears and hurts. This area is not as often thought of in normal political life. It includes public statements or acts that symbolize contrition and forgiveness — recognition of harm that has been done and apologize for it.

Name as many steps as you can think of to remove each of the obstacles you have listed. Since no single action may be enough to change longstanding relationships, a series of steps will be

needed for cumulative impact. You need to pay special attention to the human obstacles. You also need to pay attention to the obstacles your group poses or are responsible for. They are often the most serious obstacles, but we are least familiar in dealing with them.

Third, these steps need to be arranged in some realistic *interactive sequence*. In order to have the impact of changing a relationship, these steps must be placed in a pattern of action, response, and further response. If the purpose is to change the dynamics of the interaction among groups, then the steps must be taken interactively. For instance, Party A may be able to take step one only if it is assured that Party B will respond; Party B may agree, but only if Party A will respond with step three. We have often called this sequence of interactive steps a "scenario" because it resembles the way a playwright builds an act in a play with the interactions among the characters on the stage building a situation and then moving it forward.

What steps could your group take first? What is the exact objective? What responses from other groups are required to make them possible? Must those responses be agreed before the first steps can be taken? Why? Is it possible to cluster steps to enhance impact? What impact do you want? When several significant steps have been taken, is there a way to create public recognition that something different is beginning to happen? Is a cluster of steps possible to dramatize and consolidate the new trend?

Products and Transition

It is difficult to say which is the more important *product* of this thinking together — the scenario itself as a plan for future action or the relationships within the group that have been changed by creating the scenario. The scenario does provide a plan which could be taken out of the group into governments and organizations where participants are influential as suggestions for a new course of action. But the learning about the relationship produced in the participants may lead them to insights that are even more important.

This stage ends when participants are satisfied with the scenario, but the delicate question hanging over the group will be: "What do we do with this plan?" They can simply treat their experience as a learning exercise within the group, perhaps to be shared with a few close colleagues outside the group. Or the group could say, "This is too important to leave where it is. We have to find a way to put this into action."

The choice of whether to go on to act together to put these insights into play in the political arena may be difficult for many. So there may be at the end of this stage a deep discussion of the dangers and advantages of taking the next step. The participants may have very difficult personal and group choices to make. A moderator will not try to influence this deliberation. If they decide at least to talk among themselves about next steps, then they are ready to move to

Stage Five.

STAGE FIVE: ACTING TOGETHER

The *purpose* at this stage is to develop practical ways the scenario(s) might be put into action. Whether participants will take action is still a matter of difficult choice for each of them.

The *task* at this stage is for the participants to reflect together on what is possible for them. The moderator should revert to a more permissive style. Her/his role is to help the participants explore the different options, and to help them think through the pros and cons of each option. The moderator could draw on other experiences to outline some choices for the group to discuss. One difficulty is to help participants deal with their own doubt that a small group of citizens could have significant impact on the course of events.

Option One. The participants focus on what personal use they can make of the ideas generated in the group. They might share those insights with governments and/or with their individual organizations, but without any effort on their part to get the recommendations implemented. The advantage of Option One is that it is feasible and can happen in a variety of ways with minimal cost. The disadvantage is that such an approach may not have a direct impact on government policy. Governments usually ignore citizens outside of government.

Option Two. The group becomes an action group. It would assume responsibility for lobbying the authorities to make sure that their recommendations are implemented. In the extreme case, the group would assume responsibility for implementing those recommendations themselves. The advantage of Option Two is that the group would benefit tremendously from working together on implementation. The disadvantage of Option Two is that the group could become absorbed in a course of action and could lose its capacity to step back and reflect on its actions, although this might be overcome by building into the group's work a sequence of acting and then stepping back to reflect on the actions taken and their consequences.

Option Three. Enlarge the meeting space and invite periodically to the meeting participants from the government and/or other conflicting groups. An advantage of Option Three is to make it possible to create a subset of the group to discuss a particular problem, while preserving the integrity of the original group itself. A disadvantage of Option Three is that it may not produce change/action in the short term.

Option Four. The group from very early in its dialogue might keep in mind the possible strategy of proliferating dialogue groups. The purpose would be gradually to create a critical mass of people who recognize the need for changing relationships and are committed to actions for doing so.

A variation of this approach is at least to ask at each stage of the dialogue who else needs to be at the table or who else needs to be

kept abreast of the progress of the dialogue and to discuss strategies for involving them. Often, if there are no overt hostilities, people deny that there is any problem.

Products

One product is that the group will experience working together on implementation strategies over a period of time. As they do, they will gain deeper and deeper insight into the obstacles and opportunities each group experiences.

An even more significant product — if the group commits itself to see its scenario carried out — is the potential for spreading their way of thinking and their scenario of actions more and more widely. Tangible impact is possible.

[This paper is a conceptualization of more than a decade of dialogue among Americans and Soviets in the Dartmouth Conference Regional Conflicts Task Force sponsored by the Kettering Foundation and among Israelis and Palestinians. It is presented here to pose the question: Is such dialogue applicable to other conflictual relationships?]

Afterword

by David Mathews

I would like to begin this postscript by returning to David Brown's description of the problem that led to this journal — the concern that America's campuses are confronted with differences that people find hard to talk about constructively. Because it is difficult to talk about these differences constructively, it is equally difficult to collaborate successfully in addressing them. David invites our attention to two different, though interrelated, matters.

One is *how* we deal with differences; the other is how we deal with one another as we talk about our differences. Obviously, the more difficulty we have in talking with one another, the more difficulty we will have in dealing with the differences themselves.

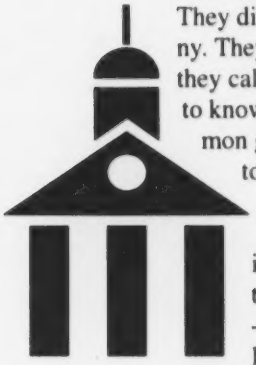
The very last essay in this collection, by Harold Saunders and Randa Slim, picks up on the problem of talking about differences. Harold Saunders should know a great deal about talking under trying circumstances. He was in the State Department and worked closely with President Carter during the Camp David talks. Before that, he had shuttled around the world with Henry Kissinger carrying messages back and forth among people whose differences were so great that they could not talk at all. More recently, in directing the Kettering Foundation's international work, Harold has developed nongovernmental dialogues between the United States and the then Soviet Union, and between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

The Saunders/Slim article argues that before any successful resolution of differences is possible, the parties have to engage one another successfully in finding a way to talk and think together. The way people talk to one another sets a pattern that can model the way they want to relate in the future. Not any kind of conversation will do when differences are so great that conflicts abound. Conversations have to be grounded in the recognition of legitimate differences in perspective and interest. Yet, they have to move beyond mutual recriminations to explore the possibility of overlapping, if not mutual interests. They have to go into sufficient depth, so that each party really comprehends what the other is saying. The Saunders' model of public talk relies on the ability of speech to shape political reality. The objective is not simply understanding if the parties want genuinely to act together to solve problems that no one party can solve alone.

A recent study by The Harwood Group on the political environment of college and university campuses finds students ready for the kind of talk that Harold Saunders advocates. Students hear "discussions" on their campuses that often appall them. For example, at one

institution a student complained, "People are very opinionated in my classes, there is no moderation at all and [the discussion] gets totally out of bounds." Discussions seem to be dominated by the extremes, and these diatribes don't strike students as useful. As a student on another campus observed, "There are no solutions discussed; it is all rhetoric."

The Harwood Group asked students what they thought was missing in the campus discussions they criticized. They said they missed having a diversity of perspectives as well as an opportunity to really listen and carefully weigh trade-offs. Students wanted more discussions in which it was all right to be tentative, to explore possibilities. They didn't argue for less emotion in discussions but for less acrimony. They wanted to see more moderation, more appreciation for what they called the "gray" or indeterminate nature of issues. They wanted to know how to make compromises with integrity and create common ground for action. Students said that college should be a place to learn how to keep an open mind, how to stand in another person's shoes, and how to make decisions with other people.



The Harwood study tells me that students seem to know instinctively that in order to deal with differences, those on their campuses have to learn how to talk differently. Campuses — and the country as a whole for that matter — could use a little less debate and a little more dialogue, a little less ideology and a little more serious deliberation about practical problems.

Happily, some institutions and some faculty are trying to bring dialogue and deliberation back to their campuses. They are creating forums, often in conjunction with the community outside the campus, in which students can learn to talk about differences over issues constructively. Their timing is good because many of these same colleges and universities are also creating community service programs that will bring students into contact, not just with differences on campuses, but with social ills that often grow out of differences that society at large cannot talk about constructively. Students warm to opportunities for service. But the experience is likely to make them wonder even more about how to remedy the fundamental problems that make the service necessary. Service programs will create still another imperative for getting on with the business of teaching students how to talk about problems when differences abound.

Meaningful, that is, intentional and purposeful political action begins with the action of the public talking to itself. How else can the public decide on shared purposes? Political talk will inevitably be expressive, with individuals sounding off in various ways, but it also must be shared, civil, and exploratory. A democratic country has to have a political dialogue that is public — so do our campuses. It is there that students can learn to practice a different kind of political dialogue that helps them envision a different kind of politics — one that has a place for them.

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